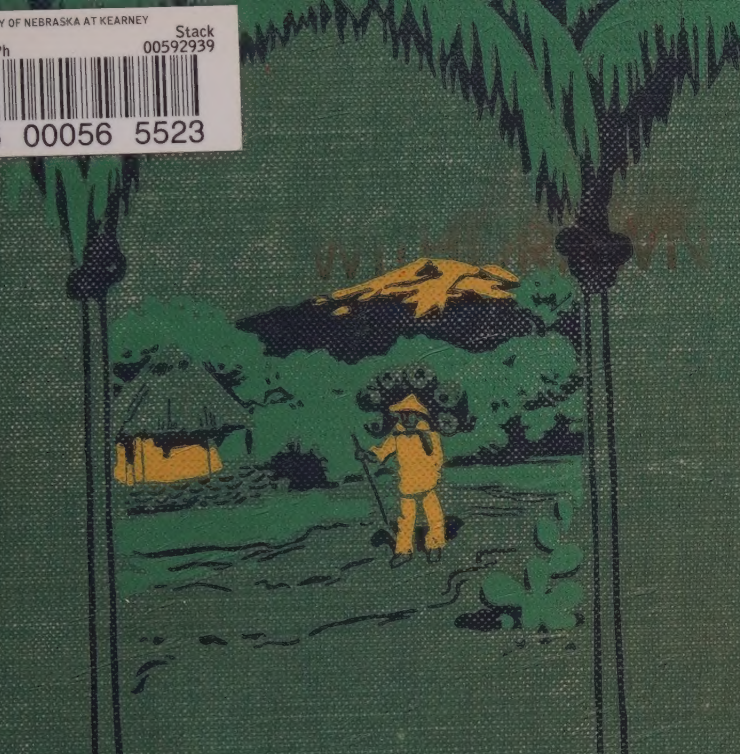


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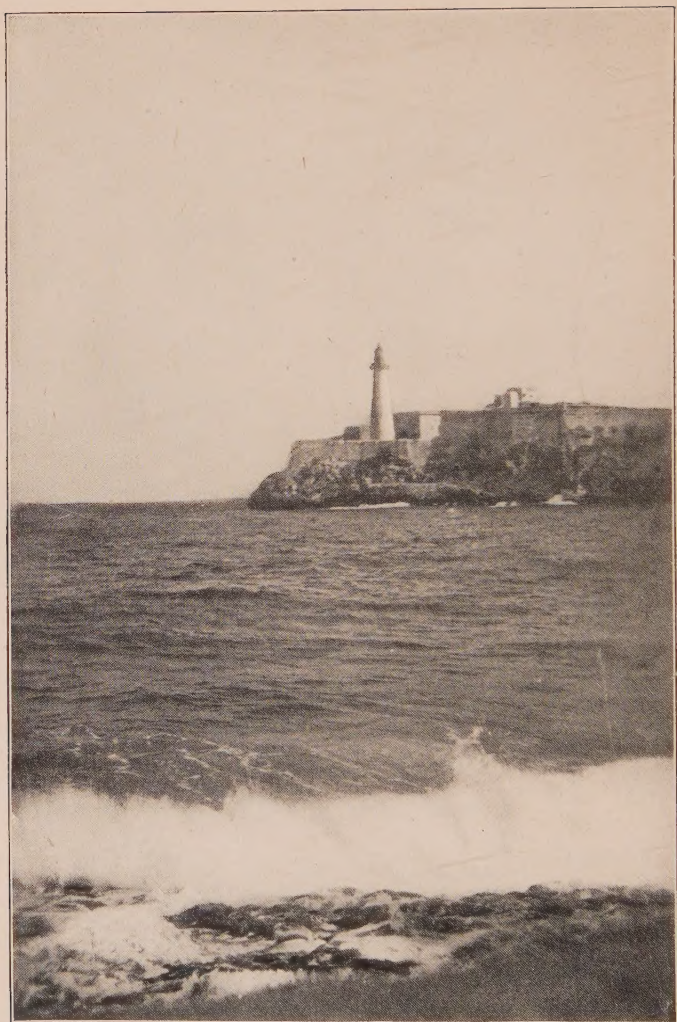
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SAILING SOUTH



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MORRO CASTLE, HAVANA

SAILING SOUTH

BY
PHILIP SANFORD MARDEN

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WITH ILLUSTRATIONS



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PREFACE

IN justice alike to the author and the gentle reader it should be said well in advance that the aim of this book is diversion rather than instruction. The few and fleeting glimpses that are herein recorded cannot qualify one as an expert on tropical countries. Only the most superficial effort has been made to purvey useful information, historical or otherwise. The chapters which follow contain chiefly the personal observations incident to casual winter cruising, such as one embodies in letters home; and that they are embodied in this enduring form is possibly not to be justified even by the belief that the field remains thus far too meagerly tilled. Nevertheless this book is offered in the hope that innocent enjoyment may be afforded to such as may be present or prospective visitors to lands which the author has himself found delightful and interesting places wherein to spend a brief winter's holiday. The islands and countries visited are few and are far from being unfamiliar. It is a book concerned exclusively with the beaten track. But if it suffices to enliven the tedium of a day at sea, or to awaken pleasant memories, or to arouse the desire

for more intimate acquaintance with the environs of the Caribbean, it will not have been written in vain. All of which is said, not by way of apology, and still less in the hope of disarming criticism, but solely in the interests of honesty and in the desire to forestall misconception as to the scope and intention of the book.

PHILIP SANFORD MARDEN

LOWELL, MASS.

August, 1920

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PART ONE
CUBA AND PANAMA

CHAPTER I

SAILING SOUTH

THOSE whose experience of the sea consists solely in voyaging to and from Europe will find sailing south decidedly a different, and in many ways a more impressive, performance. To one's surprise, the undoubted fact of the earth's sphericity, usually taken on trust, becomes an intimate and interesting reality.

There is comparatively little realization of this fact to be gleaned from a mere east-and-west passage — always under familiar stars and roughly in the same general climate. One might pursue a consistently eastward course over sea and land, from New York to New York, and the only notable alterations would be in the daily gain of half an hour or so until one reached home again, after passing that mysterious point in mid-Pacific where it is always either day-before-yesterday or day-after-to-morrow (I have never been quite certain which, but know at least that it is never at that point what the rest of the world regards as to-day). The heavens as viewed from Naples are much the same as those observed from Boston, Yokohama, Petrograd, and

London. It is sailing south that suddenly convinces you of the terrestrial rotundity — partly because of phenomena in the heavens above and no less notably because of climatic changes on the earth beneath.

One goes down over the rim of the horizon into different seas and different skies — so rapidly that the changes force themselves upon even the most casual notice. Surely the Dipper is curiously out of place! It is dipping — as no doubt a dipper should! As for that star low in the south and just above the prow — surely that is one you never saw before! It may be an outpost of the Southern Cross! Curiosity as to the Southern Cross is almost the first symptom of the acquisition of sea-legs on a south-bound liner. Passengers seem to expect it to dawn in full splendor upon them about the second night out. Obliging first-officers usually inform you that it can be seen if you care to come on deck at some outrageous hour like two in the morning — and the few who act upon this advice will invariably report that they saw this famous, but much overrated, constellation. Whether or not they did so in fact one may hardly dispute, since dispute in such a case is at once futile and unkind. I hasten to make confession that I have never yet seen the true Southern Cross and doubt that many of the thou-

sands who claim to have viewed it ever really saw it without going much farther south than the City of Panama. I have been told by credible persons that in any case it is a disappointing galaxy — not to be compared with either the Dipper or Orion — which owes its fame largely to the principle of *omne ignotum*.

By day, it is the abrupt change of climate that emphasizes the fact of the earth's globularity — a change for the better, due to the swift approach to latitudes where the sun of winter is more nearly overhead and therefore more concentrated in effect. You have left behind a miserable and half-frozen population, dwelling on the top of a sadly tilted planet and temporarily well out of the sun's path — but you yourself are crawling steadily down over the face of the terrestrial ball into a more genial condition of things.

Besides, there is the Gulf Stream — a much-maligned current of warm water, often derided as a myth but apparently quite seriously regarded by such as do business in the great waters. On every passenger craft there will be smoke-room babble about the legendary character of the Gulf Stream. Respectable scientists have gravely informed me that it does not exist at all — that some ancient German geographer imagined it and engraved lines

on the map to represent it, whence all the world has been duped into accepting it as a reality. My own disposition is to become as a little child when at sea and accept all its myths as genuine truth. As for the Gulf Stream, I really don't see how we can do without it. Very possibly its effect upon the climate of Great Britain and Ireland has been overstressed — and very possibly the notion that it alone is what makes so notorious the rough passage to Bermuda is an exaggeration. But when you find hourly canvas buckets of water hauled gravely to the bridge and see thermometers inserted therein, as seriously as if the ocean were a fever patient, you gather that the navigator has a firm belief in the reality of the warm current that pours out of the Florida straits and makes its way uphill toward Newfoundland and the distant North.

If you make the voyage from New York to Havana, you will find the ship kept close inshore with the idea of avoiding as far as may be the opposing force of a four-knot current; and conversely as you sail northward again you will observe that the vessel is kept well offshore in search of such assistance as the favoring stream can give. Wherefore it seems both safe and sane to accept the Gulf Stream as entirely real and a moderately useful provision of a wise Creator.

Setting, as this current does, from southwest to northeast, much depends upon the direction of the wind when it comes to the net effect upon the surface of the sea. A wind blowing with the current, if it be not in itself a violent breeze, will presumably insure a reasonably smooth passage. A wind vehemently opposing the surface current of the waters will infallibly make it rough. I imagine there are such things as mill-pond passages to the Bermudas, although common account discredits this.

The great bugaboo of southern sailing, of course, is Hatteras. The very name has a raucous sound suggestive of howling gales and turbulent seas. Most of us have dreaded Hatteras from our cradles. Hatteras is the cape formed by a malignant elbow thrust into the Atlantic by the otherwise chivalrous State of North Carolina. I suspect that it really does influence the weather to some extent, whether because of its impulsion of the Gulf Stream, or its mysterious influence on the depths of air. At all events, I note that the Government commonly "orders storm-warnings displayed from Hatteras to Eastport" when it scents trouble brewing among the elements. But after one has made divers voyages to and from the southern ports one comes to regard Hatteras as a somewhat slandered promontory, chiefly because one may conceivably pass that

way a dozen times and note nothing at all amiss in the conduct of the weather. The notion that you are bound to meet with a storm off this much-maligned apex of our southern coast-line may be dismissed as nonsense. You may, or you may not. The wise traveler goes to sea and takes what comes.

Cape Hatteras, by the way, is not commonly visible from the ships that go southward seeking West Indian ports. In fact after you leave the Jersey Highlands you will not see land again for some time. If you are making for Havana, you will probably pick up the Florida shore somewhere in the neighborhood of Cape Canaveral, and will, for the sake of avoiding hostile currents, skirt the low-lying coast of Palm Beach so closely as almost to imperil the bathers of that Lucullan retreat. If you are bound for Porto Rico, you will see absolutely no land of any sort or kind until you sight the lofty mountains that rise behind San Juan. If Jamaica be your goal, you will see — unless, as usually happens on ships, you pass in the night — Watling's Island, which Columbus more piously and appropriately christened San Salvador; and following that you will be treated to a near view of sundry other outposts of the Bahama group, with finally a near view of Cape Maisi in Cuba. Unusually clear weather may even afford

a distant prospect of Haiti. The Bermudas you will not see at all, unless you are going thither.

Cape Hatteras, then, you must take on faith. Havana steamers commonly pass close to a light-ship that lies a long way east of the mainland; but of the mainland itself you are made aware only in case it happens to be one of Hatteras's moments for a meteorologic tantrum. It may be added also, for the reassurance of the timorous, that stormy times in these latitudes have a comfortable habit of ending as suddenly as they begin — although this may not be relied upon as the invariable rule. A blow that has kept an entire ship's company below at breakfast may abate and bring all hands merrily to dinner.

In any case the third day ought to find people appearing in their summer gear. If three degrees of latitude will, as some wise man once remarked, "reverse all jurisprudence," they will work even greater wonders with the winter climate. New York, choked with snow, only increases the miracle of that third day — or at all events the fourth — when one is sailing a summer sea near shores begirt with palm, through school upon school of flying fish. The flannels and Palm Beach suits which seemed such absurdities in New York are absurdities no longer.

As for the flying fish, they are among the traditional allurements of the southern voyage. One is

amazed to find them so tiny, so swallow-like, so incredibly numerous, so capable of sustained flight. Blasé travelers will ask you to believe that you will tire of them in a little time — but this is a thumping untruth. You never really tire of flying fish. You become accustomed to them; but you will blister the back of your devoted neck standing in the prow to see the diminutive creatures go skimming away across the waves from the intrusion of the onrushing stem, scales gleaming in the sun, and grace unspeakable in every movement which so strongly recalls the skipping stones of one's childhood. By comparison with the flying fish, the floating seaweeds, once so comforting to Columbus and his crews, lack power to enthrall. They will undoubtedly have the effect, however, of producing much energetic speculation as to the Sargasso Sea — another of those comfortable sea mysteries so alluring to the imaginations of the First Cabin, which has heard of the Sargasso Sea without being very sure where it is, and of the Spanish Main without being altogether certain of the location of that. In sailing south you are venturing upon a romantic belt of our earth, where Pieces of Eight are vaguely supposed to be the ruling currency, and where a multitude of half-forgotten traditions stimulate the imagination to flights of fancy which often break

every established record for altitude among a properly stimulated smoke-room gathering.

By the fifth day out it is high time to begin discussions as to the trade winds, since the comparatively steady northeast breeze is due to be encountered at this juncture and is destined to become a daily familiar while you remain in the northerly verges of the torrid zone. This in its turn is certain to be productive of much pseudo-science among the deck-chairs — trade winds, their cause and cure, periodicity, perpetuity, effect upon marine and terrestrial weather, rainy seasons, and so on, affording virtually unlimited material for polite conversation among holiday-makers, to whom the tropics are an uncharted and fascinating domain. It will suffice here to remark that the northeast trade wind is no myth, is practically regular in its operation throughout the year, is prone to blow chiefly by day, and tends to make the Caribbean a bumpy but not commonly an unpleasant sea.

Like so many other things, steamship lines to the tropics have suffered from the effects of the war and may not at present be said to be in a normal condition of excellence. A few years ought to cure that, however. Diversion of the wonted craft to the purposes of transport for men and materials has wrought changes which the incessant rush of post-

war business has left no opportunity to repair. Now and again wandering U-boats took toll even on our coasts, and at least one of the Porto Rico liners was sent to the bottom by a torpedo in the full tide of the submarine destruction. Nevertheless one may be reasonably comfortable on a southern cruise, in almost any season, by the regular ships; and of course the special cruises during the winter months offer luxury surpassing what one looks for in a regular voyage devoted chiefly to trading in bananas and other tropical commodities.

But the effects of the war were not altogether deleterious. For one thing, Europe being closed to the tourist, the tropics suddenly revealed possibilities for such as regard the ideal vacation to be that which involves a sea voyage. The dimly appreciated attractions of the warm countries have become a vivid reality to thousands, and the ultimate effect beyond question will be a great advance both in the means of transport and in the excellence of the accommodations ashore. Even to-day there is an agreeable primitiveness in the latter, once you get away from the principal centers of population in tropic islands or on the mainland of Central America; but in such considerable cities as Havana, San Juan, Kingston, Port Antonio, and the two main stations of the Canal Zone, there are already

hotels meriting the description "luxurious" and even the less-frequented sites afford very tolerable comfort. The effect of certain other novel elements, such as the recent establishment of American prohibition, need hardly be stressed. In that direction a variety of choice is possible — between such cities as Havana, where gayety rules supreme, and where the concomitants of a lively life are most in evidence, and such towns as San Juan or those of the Zone, which adhere to the austere American habit now so much in vogue.

There are those who claim that at any season, even the northern midsummer, a journey to the tropics is both comfortable and rewarding. The wiser custom, however, confines the pleasure-seeker to the six months between November and May. It is entirely true that in the torrid zone the temperature varies but little with the seasons, if you trust entirely to the thermometer. But there are certain other elements to be borne in mind, such as the brief intermissions in the blowing of the trade winds, the concentrated seasons of humidity in which rain is the daily occurrence, and above all the fact that one going south in our own summer-time experiences no reactions due to climatic differences between the tropics and home. Our northern summer, indeed, is often hotter — for a very

brief period — than the tropic summer. Alaska may have isolated days of greater heat than Kingston or Colon. The sensible time to go to the warm areas of the earth is when the glass runs around zero in New England and New York. To exchange cold for heat is wisdom. To voyage from one hot climate to another which, to say the least, will not be much cooler, is folly.

The Antilles, one must always remember, are not by any means an equatorial group of islands. Even Panama lies some nine degrees north of our earth's capacious waist-line, and Havana is only about one hundred miles south of Florida; so that there is still room for some solar variations in that region, even when one has passed below the Tropic of Cancer, although their effect upon the temperature is not greatly marked. It is always warm there — hot, in fact — save in the highlands, which are by contrast reasonably cool. It is usually cool enough for comfort, even on the coasts, by night. Veracious young men, long resident in Panama, have told me that they invariably sought a light blanket for covering before morning throughout the year, thanks to the steadiness of the nocturnal breeze. Admittedly, however, you would not freeze without one — but what would you? The object in going to the tropics is to find tropical conditions;

and in midwinter such conditions are paradisiacal to all but those hardy souls who must choose January for their expeditions into Labrador and the region of Hudson's Bay.

By the expenditure of six days in time and a reasonable amount of money it is wholly possible to exchange the extreme rigors of the northern winter for the delights of a land where it is always a sort of summer afternoon, and where the conditions of living are so different as to produce that desirable effect upon habits, customs, architecture, language, and complexion which forms the great attraction in going anywhere "abroad." To get away from home for a space — away from home ways of doing things, home standards, home speech, home people — is of the essence of travel for many of us and is what chiefly militates against that otherwise meritorious slogan "See America first." Havana is the most completely "foreign" city that could be conceived — and yet it lies only a few hours' steaming from the southern end of the Key West viaduct. Cuba, Porto Rico, and the countries of Central America are outposts of ancient Spain, where Spanish is still a very desirable language to have at one's command. The fact of its long possession by England is the chief handicap against Jamaica and the other scattered British possessions of the

Caribbean, because, while otherwise among the loveliest of all earthly paradises, such do away with the illusion of foreignness, both in speech and institutions, which is so ardently coveted by the sight-seeing American.

One obsessed by the passion for imparting helpful hints to the inexperienced is sorely tempted to embellish an introduction like this with needless advice. Let it be said only that in a country where it is usually about 90° in the shade at noon and something over 60° at night, and where in addition it very frequently pours with rain, common sense should afford the safest guide as to the equipment of the transitory guest. All the lightest clothing you can find, a gossamer raincoat, and an umbrella are clearly indicated, as the doctors say. The straw hat of the tropics is abundant and inexpensive — so that might as well be purchased on arrival.

Meantime, do not expect too much — because you cannot!

CHAPTER II

AROUND THE CARIBBEAN

PROBABLY every one has in his or her head a tolerably vague map of such portions of the earth as are reasonably familiar — “tolerably vague” being said with reason and by design. By the light of this mental atlas one has an indefinite sense of geography as a sort of glittering generality, with certain bench-marks to which dependable reference may be made, but with very little else that is accurate behind it.

Therefore it is likely that every one visualizes the Antilles as a roughly semi-circular group of islands, mostly small and apparently lying in close proximity to one another, their line extending from the toe of Florida down to the huge shoulder of the South American continent and sufficing to contain the body of water known to all mankind as the Caribbean Sea. The notable regularity of this group in the matter of curvature and alignment and the fact that, together with the peninsula of Yucatan and the long curve of the Central American mainland, a fairly symmetrical ellipse is produced on the charts, must stamp the image on even the most casual observer.

The ordinary recollection will instantly place Cuba at the upper end of this curving archipelago, partly because it is the largest of the entire group, partly because it lies nearest us, and more especially, perhaps, because certain events in 1898 forced us to take a direct personal cognizance of this great but previously little considered island. I venture the guess, however, that at this point the average man's knowledge ceases to be definite. Until one ventures into the locality and is compelled to learn a little more clearly just where Haiti and Porto Rico are, their exact locus is but dimly sensed. And as for such fascinating names as Trinidad, Barbados, Guadeloupe, Dominica, Tobago, Martinique — well, they are names and naught else. Not many could take a blank map of the West Indies and write in the names of the various islands in the so-called "Windward" and "Leeward" groups with any certainty. Most of us could identify the few that are large enough to have distinctive shapes; but on any ordinary atlas the vast majority of the islets are mere dots, signifying nothing. No doubt upon more intimate association the mystery vanishes. It takes a very meager acquaintance with tropic travel to isolate and identify Jamaica as the errant brother — the island that has somehow got out of line and wandered off into the Caribbean

south of Cuba, aloof from the others and giving the general effect of being just a trifle superior. The rest simply sweep in one gigantic curve from the northern to the southern continent — evidently a long, submerged mountain range logically correlated, the peaks being the several islands, but all remote enough from the everyday concerns of men to be nameless each.

The recent acquisition of the several small islands of the Virgin group, which our country bought from Denmark within a very brief space of time, has begun somewhat to reduce the mystery. Many, if not most of us, now place them without effort as lying next east of Porto Rico, and with the increasing vogue of southern sailing it is wholly probable that they will become goals of visitation. Their various names, referring to certain saints of high repute, are dimly recalled — St. Thomas especially. But aside from the fact that they are islands famous for bay rum and tidal waves, the ordinary American still pays them too little heed. Martinique achieved a transitory celebrity not many years ago by reason of a fearful volcanic eruption. Trinidad, lying far to the south, seems to be suggestive of asphaltic pavement. The rest connote nothing in particular save the vague notion of waving palms, slothful negroes, odd tropical fruits, and

early venturings on the part of buccaneers from Spain.

The designations of the Windward and Leeward groups will hazily suggest that they lie somehow with reference to prevailing winds — but even after you have gone there the exact reason escapes you. The wind certainly does “prevail” with a vengeance — a stiff northeast breeze which must necessarily have its counterpart somewhere. But the leeward islands seem distressingly windward ones if you view them from the right angle.

It is not the intent of this book to deal with the minor members of the Antillean archipelago. Let us be content, like George Sampson on a famous occasion, to “know that they are there” and continue to know them vaguely as the huge natural breakwater enclosing the Caribbean Sea — a breakwater which does not make the Caribbean a sheltered sheet of water by any means, but on the contrary a distinctly bumpy and usually a trying one to such as experience disquiet when they go down to the sea in ships. One cannot expect aught else of a sea where the wind blows day in and day out from the same direction with an intensity that is reasonably constant. After all it is the trade wind that makes the tropical islands tolerable places of resort. Without it, they would be wretchedly hot,

winter and summer alike. With it, they have their allurements. The northernmost ones — Cuba, Haiti, and Porto Rico — are places of delight at the proper seasons — not too tropical, but just tropical enough.

The shape of Cuba, the greatest of them all, somehow suggests, and not inappropriately, a cornucopia. Haiti seems rather like the head of a weary old man, yawning capaciously in the direction of the setting sun. Porto Rico invariably reminds me, with its curiously regular outline, of our old-fashioned pastime of trying to draw a pig with one's eyes shut. Jamaica is sufficiently like unto it to be its twin. And yet, as you go from one island to another, you will probably be struck by the fact that islands so near allied in point of geography are arrestingly different — different in vegetation, different in atmosphere, above all different in people. The latter, however, is a natural consequence of history. Jamaica has been British ever since Cromwell. Cuba was Spanish down to a quarter-century ago and probably will continue Spanish throughout all time. Haiti and Santo Domingo — none of us can say where the one leaves off and the other begins on their common insularity — seem to be incurably negroid. Porto Rico manfully strives to be American, but is as Spanish as a tortilla still. Cuba, in a proper wind, can be bleak and almost cold; for

outwardly Cuba is the least tropical to the inquiring eye of the tourist.

It is much the same, I fear, on the mainland side of the Caribbean. We all know very well where Mexico is — almost too well, perhaps. But what happens when you get below Mexico? Can you bound the various free and independent countries loosely known in popular speech and in the public prints as the “Latin-American republics”? The names you probably know. The exact order in which they come and the relations which the several republics bear to one another you most probably do not know with anything like certainty. The reason is presumably that it has n’t interested you to make this knowledge your own, despite the efforts of zealous persons headed by the Honorable John Barrett during many years to create an *entente cordiale* between the United States and the numerous states to which we stand, whether they like it or not, *in loco parentis*. Not many of us are aware of the situation or general shape of, say, Salvador, or Honduras. The names are apt to connote such incongruities as earthquakes, mahogany, and revolutions.

It will not be ever thus, but it is so now. To adopt the frequent phrase of politicians and chambers of commerce, these Latin-American countries

“have a future before them.” For the moment they are not quite in the way of realizing it, being largely undeveloped, ill-provided with roads, almost unprovided with rail transport, and altogether too abundantly equipped with the regnant spirit of revolt. But the materials of a future are there, prepared, no doubt, from the beginning of the world. Deep in the jungle lie ruins that indicate the possession of a monumental past, as well, suggesting infinite speculations as to the ancient course of empire. Archæology has a stake in the Latin-Americas as surely as have commerce and trade. But one has first to subdue nature, overcome the jungle, triumph over the Latin temperament — and all those things are hard.

Nevertheless they are not impossibilities. By dint of cutting a Gordian knot with a not too lovely blow, and by the exercise of ingenuity in sanitary engineering, Panama has been put distinctly on the map. Those who remember the hell-hole that was once Aspinwall must marvel at the health and prosperity of Cristobal and Colon. But in that case the need of the canal was the incentive, and similar incentives have not arisen farther north. The conquest of other localities has been left to merchant adventurers in quest of bananas, lumber, and minerals, or to railroad concessionnaires hampered

now and again by changing political fortunes in the countries granting the concession. Panama, much to the disquiet of the great and friendly nation of Colombia, became an affair of national magnitude; and the miracle that happened there, despite certain qualms as to the manner of its doing, has probably impressed every American who has visited the Isthmus with an entirely new idea of the power and resourcefulness of his own countrymen. It is not the purpose of the present chapter to reopen the vexed questions that beset the acquisition of title to the Canal Zone and the separation of Panama from its parent country, or to argue the possible proposition of a right of international eminent domain. Progress sometimes has to be made at the expense of scruple; is usually cruel in raw nature, and not infrequently is so in art.

We have come thus far, then, that there lies to the south of us by less than a week's steaming a great sea enclosed between lands whereof we are unpardonably ignorant; a sea that breathes romance and lands the richness of which we are but dimly aware. Assuming as we have for a century or more the sole guardianship of this domain by sea and land, we are disgracefully ignorant of our wards. We are not trusted by them. And what is true of the restricted area known as Central Amer-



IN CRISTOBAL

ica is no less true of the gigantic continent that opens farther south to rival in immensity and possibilities that which we and the Canadians have made our own. A beginning, looking toward better understandings and a livelier interest, has been made in the incomparable Pan-American palace, which is perhaps the finest modern building in Washington. But the most promising way of all to cement alliances and friendly intercourse is to go and see; for better is the sight of the eyes than the wandering of the desire.

It should be understood first of all that the people of the Latin-Americas whenever prosperity permits seek either a European or American education; that the cities, what few there are, present attractions not to be despised; and above all that those inhabiting the Latin-Americas are the direct inheritors of an ancient Spanish civilization, whereof the ways are not our ways, neither the thoughts our thoughts. It is necessary that we Americans cultivate a certain adaptability, to which we seem but little prone, as the first step toward greater intimacy, and it follows that by no means all the work is to be done abroad. A measure, and an important measure, is to be done at home. Perhaps the first essential is a broadened knowledge, but certainly the second is enlightened patience. Our country is great, and it is

apparently too easy to awaken in the Latin breast a fear that we might turn out to be an overgrown bully. The liberation of Cuba has not altogether sufficed to offset Panama, and it is not yet revealed what Mexico has in store.

Five years of war have done much to turn American interest in the direction of the Central American states, adding themselves to the lure of the great Canal. As a result many thousand of our people who formerly made holiday in Europe have during those five years discovered anew the sites first exploited by Columbus. Havana, San Juan, the Zone, and Costa Rica especially have suddenly become more familiar ground to many who formerly lavished their attention on the other hemisphere. It has been discovered that these hot countries have their lure and that there is some practical geography to be studied nearer home. Some history also, for it seems true that we have all been taking Columbus and the early Spaniards rather too much for granted. This was their domain, the western terminus of the Silver Road. And while the vestiges of the early days are faint and often hard to find, many lie half buried in the forests, and the descendants of stout Cortez are all about. All this, however, relates to yesterday, comparatively speaking, since even Columbus came a scant four centuries ago. The really intriguing

thing is the civilization which this portion of the world must have known in the unguessed ages before the world-seeking Genoese pushed his way overseas to the false Cathay. Evidently there was something there — and yet what do we know of it, behind 1492? Our earliest Egyptian date is something more than 4000 B.C., and the world is reasonably familiar with recorded history in that quarter since, say, the year 2500 before our Era. It is the Americas that are the real *terra incognita*, of whose past we have but the faintest glimmerings of knowledge. Aztec, Toltec, and Inca are names that recur from that far time when we were in school. So far as our own hemisphere is concerned we know less of its ninth century A.D. than we know of Egypt's nineteenth century before Christ. Yet there are monuments in Mexico and in Guatemala indicative of a curious mixture of civilization and barbarism which may one day engross attention of American school-children — and add, alas, to the discouraging mass of material of which youth must learn!

However, all this is nothing that need hold us now. No one who fares southward on any ordinary cruise is at all likely to see anything of the ancient civilization, and will perceive but few evidences of the Spanish era. An ancient bridge in the jungle, a bit of roadway once traversed by ore-bearing carts, a

moss-grown cathedral here and there, numerous islands and "keys" where Columbus is credited either with having beached his ships for cleaning, or with having paused for water, will be all that recall the brave days of Ferdinand and the wide-ruling Philips. One's present concern is with bananas, cocoanuts, copra, logwood, and the score of other native products which give the steamer lines their excuse for being. Now as of old it is an industrial conquest; and that conquest, while not yet far advanced, has at least made its mark indelibly upon the tropics to the benefit alike of *conquistado* and *conquistador*.

CHAPTER III

HAVANA

THE island of Cuba, largest and richest of the Greater Antilles, variously lauded as the Pearl of the Antilles and the Key of the New World, lies almost at our doors, a trifle over ninety miles from that curious Floridan appendage known as Key West, which Mr. Flagler's munificence has converted from an island to the prouder estate of a peninsula. Whatever may have been true of the elder days, it cannot be said that at present there is any pronounced indifference on the part of Americans to Havana — largely, one greatly fears, because of reasons not unconnected with convivial cheer. Havana, which has known many vicissitudes, has not as yet embraced the stern doctrines originally espoused by the late Neal Dow. She has surrendered nothing of her Latin heritage save only the scourge of yellow fever. She has consented to clean up and to stay clean. In all else she remains what she was before the Spanish War — a handsome town built along the shore of a landlocked harbor which has few rivals in the world and no superiors.

In fact Cuba rejoices in harbors of a curiously

safe and capacious kind along practically all her coasts — and her coastline is no inconsiderable affair, being well over two thousand miles long if you count the numerous indentations. None of us, surely, can have forgotten the long and narrow inlet of Santiago in which Captain Hobson vainly attempted to imprison Cervera's fleet by sinking a collier across the channel — a glorious harbor which has several fellows along the southern shore. This fact, coupled with the development of railroad facilities throughout the length of the island and the steady growth of good roadways, suffices to give practically every cultivable portion of the island an easy access to the sea, which is of inestimable advantage in the marketing of the products of the soil.

Cuba¹ is a much larger island than one commonly

¹ Cuba by the most recent census has a population of nearly three million. The republic is divided into six provinces of which Havana is at once the smallest in size and the largest in population. The government vests in a president and vice-president, chosen by an electoral college; a cabinet of nine officers; and a legislature which boasts twenty-four senators (four from each province) and eighty-three representatives. The judges of the supreme and subordinate federal courts are named by the president subject to senatorial confirmation. Cuba's severance from Spain began with the opening of the Spanish-American War, April 21, 1898, and her independence became complete when in May, 1902, the American occupation ended and was succeeded by the first full administration of the Cuban Republic. The constitution, however, was formally adopted February 21, 1901, and an appendix was added in June of the same year embodying the so-called "Platt Amendment," consisting of eight clauses which somewhat restrict Cuban independence. By these clauses Cuba agrees not

realizes and its position is likewise but little understood. It will probably surprise one who has given the map little attention to be told that the easternmost point of Cuba, Cape Maisi, lies directly south of New York, whereas the westernmost cape lies due south of Cincinnati — and it is further surprising to learn that the extreme length of the island is rather more than seven hundred miles. The cheerful habits of our geographers are responsible for much misconception of the relative sizes of things. Because the ordinary atlas places on one page a map of Cuba and on another a map of Massachusetts, one rather easily jumps to the erroneous conclusion that Cuba and Massachusetts must be about of a size.

With all their energy it took the Spaniards about twenty years after the discoveries by Columbus to enter into any treaties impairing her own independent status and not to permit foreign colonization or grant foreign naval or military privileges; that the Government shall not contract debts beyond the adequacy of the revenues; that the Government of the United States may intervene to preserve Cuban independence, or to insure the life, liberty, and property of individuals, or to safeguard other obligations, etc. Under this clause, owing to a violent rebellion in the island incident to an election, the United States did intervene in 1906 and a virtual occupation continued until 1909, when it was deemed safe once more to withdraw the American troops. Subsequent disorders have been dealt with effectively by the Cuban authorities without further invocation of the Platt Amendment. Sugar and sugar products form three quarters of the export trade of the island; tobacco figures at about sixteen per cent of the total; and fruits, coffee, cocoa, minerals, etc., supply the remainder.

plant settlements on the coasts of Cuba, but when they came they came thick and fast. The sheltered climate and the available harbors naturally led to the first settlement of the southern coast and as a matter of fact the original Havana was located there. But the discovery of a still better harbor on the northern side soon changed all that, and the Havana that we know promptly supplanted San Cristobal de la Habana, assuming a strategic importance easy to comprehend because of its command of the narrow straits between Cuba and the Florida keys. Indeed, this importance was self-destructive on at least two occasions, for successive incursions of buccaneers put Havana to the torch with the idea of getting rid of the meddlesome place. This, however, merely insured the heavier fortification of the city; and by 1600, a score of years before the landing of the Pilgrims in New England, the grim fortress on the point, now famous the world over as the Morro Castle, had been begun.

Little enough was done for many years by way of exploiting the natural fertility of the island, Spain preferring the quest for precious ores in a not unnatural desire — not yet extinct among men — to “get rich quick.” Havana was the chief gateway to the unknown — the port where expeditions for purposes of exploration were fitted out. Such hardy

pioneers as De Soto made it their base. Tardily, indeed, did Spain abandon the hope of finding silver and gold; but when she suddenly recognized the incomparable fertility of the Cuban soil, she carried thither sugar cane from the Canaries and thereby opened up an industry which in a brief time put the mining operations to sleep. Cuba became valuable, not for what was dug out of the soil, but for what was put into it. The native Indian stock being all but exterminated by this time, slave labor from Africa was brought in — thus mingling curses with blessings in the usual human way.

Apart from a quaintly incongruous interval, during which Cuba was actually conquered and held in subjection by English and American colonial troops under Albemarle (1762–63), Cuba has been incurably Spanish. Nothing was then heard of any revolt against the rule of the Most Catholic Kings; and when Havana discovered in 1808 that one Napoleon had impiously overthrown the reigning Spanish dynasty at Madrid, Cuba promptly declared war on Napoleon! Fourscore years later, however, the “ever faithful” island had learned a different tune. Revolution, with all its attendant horrors of “re-concentration camps” and other repressive schemes of Captain-General Weyler, led swiftly to the intervention of America, the conquest of Cuba, the peace

with Spain, and the ultimate independence of the insular republic — independence with, it is true, a few salutary strings to it in the shape of the half-forgotten but still vital “Platt Amendment,” whereby it is incumbent upon Cuba to behave, to keep clean, to pay her debts, and to keep European hands off.

Whether or not Cuba truly loves the United States it would be rash to say. Appearances indicate a genuine appreciation. Monuments commemorating the salutary deeds of the Americans under General Wood adorn the Prado, and above all the Cubans have learned that to be clean, decent, and reasonably law-abiding actually pays. Nevertheless there is bound to be some latent restiveness under the feeling that there is a shadowy sort of guardianship lurking behind the freedom — a certain resentment of the feeling that always attends a “Thou shalt not,” even though the prohibition be for one’s admitted good.

Mountainous to west and south, Cuba is visible from afar to the eye of faith. Viewed from a remote but approaching ship, every island is likely to seem at first a cloud. Dispute is certain to arise among those who see it and those who do not. But such disputes have the merit of solving themselves in a very brief interval of time in favor of the sharper-visioned.

That long blue cloud, half visible on the horizon, turns out to be land after all. Ships are seen to be converging upon it. Trailing smokes from deep glens in the hillsides betoken the burning of the refuse of plantations. That white splash on the landscape at the water's edge must be Havana — a name that instantly suggests the aroma of a billion boxes of incomparable cigars.

My own first view of Havana came at a fortunate hour — that just preceding sunset on a day of indescribable beauty. For two days it had been fine, and the dirty weather of the northern latitudes had been forgotten. The previous evening we had skirted the Florida coast, well inshore to avoid the thrust of the Gulf Current — a thoroughly flat, stale, and unprofitable Florida coast, relieved of utter monotony only by the garish lights of Palm Beach. That notable retreat we passed in the dark, so close at hand that hardened travelers on deck affected to pick out definite objects, such as hotels and a single errant trolley-car. That superlatively honest mariner, the chief officer, persuaded two innocent maiden ladies of uncertain age that the planet Venus was the light of an airplane, which he said made nightly voyages for the delectation of holiday-making millionaires, and he called attention to the fact that it was actually following us

along. So it did — night after night, and all the way to Panama; but for the moment it was unquestioningly accepted as an airship and much exclamation at its steady flight might be heard well into the evening.

Then came the cloudless dawn, the early glimpses of the Key West viaduct, and a day of ploughing through a summer sea — until at last, just as light was failing, we entered the narrow gut between the Morro and the city.

I have seen many harbors in this hemisphere and the other, but I am persuaded that not one of them is lovelier than that of Havana, as a matter of approaches. It is a surprising place. You come up to within a mile or so before you really see what it is like, and then you perceive that a narrow inlet between two forts opens into a broad and well-protected inner basin. Cuba is high and bold enough to be seen afar. We made it out in the early afternoon. But Havana itself we did not uncover until just as the sun was sinking in an incredible glory, shedding a mellow light over the western sea and gilding the water-front of the gleaming city with a beauty hardly to be described. Across the golden path of the sun there loafed a leisurely schooner, outward bound. Ashore the lights began to twinkle from the rocks. Street after street flashed into long strings

of twinkling gems as if by magic. Still it was not yet night — only the dusk of a summer's day. It seemed a toy town, spreading far along the margin of the bay and wandering off inland to the hills. On the port bow loomed the ancient fortress of the Morro Castle with its tower — a faded old fort, rose-pink in the light of that marvelous afterglow, and crowned with its grim lighthouse whereon I was speedily able to make out in bold letters that valiant and highly Spanish name, O'Donnell! I felt at home at once, of course. But why O'Donnell?

Well, it seems that Leopold O'Donnell, Duke of Tetuan, was governor-general of Cuba in 1843, and I suppose he got his name tattooed on the Morro while he was in residence. You will also find streets named for him all over Old Spain itself, for he was a valiant fighter as became one of that lineage. Originally, no doubt, his family was Irish, although he himself was born in Teneriffe and died in France. Nor was he the only Irish association to be met with in Havana, for the second of the two chief commercial streets later turned out to be named O'Reilly, heavily disguised in the local pronunciation as Oh-ray-eel-yeh. A genuine Irishman he was, born in Dublin and long antedating O'Donnell as a soldier of fortune in Most Catholic Spain, for he flourished between 1725 and 1794. In the 1760's he served as

governor in Havana and still later held sway in Louisiana. Thus early did the Irish come to their own!

Through a constricted strait that seemed barely wide enough to let us pass we steamed to the inner bay and dropped anchor not far from the spot where the *Maine* was destroyed. By a coincidence a grim United States naval vessel was anchored there — the *Montana* — and from her decks came the animated music of the ship's band, obedient to that famous naval rule, "the band shall play while coaling ship." On either shore the white city faded away into the darkness of a balmy night, picked out in glittering rows of lights. Ferries plied to and fro. The donkey-engines started their clanking chorus, and then — "All passengers to the dining-saloon or the doctor, please!" Oh, dear!

Of course it's a matter of form. The doctor has to be passed. So you must go down and sit in a most depressing silence waiting for him — the hushed stillness broken only by the voice of some wag, who remarks after a painful interval, "What a dressy funeral!" Thereupon we all laugh and feel better. But there are always half a dozen passengers who cannot be found and who have to be chased through the ship, from garboard strake to maintruck — whatever those are. Eventually they are herded in,



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O'REILLY STREET, HAVANA

cursed *sotto voce* by sweating stewards and more audibly by the impatient passengers who were prompt. And now, behold, the doctor cometh also — a squat, fierce-looking Spaniard. He walks up and down, glaring terribly. In some previous incarnation he must have been a basilisk. If looks could kill, you would die. You can see the dotted lines running from his eyes. His glance falls on you, and you quake. Can it be that you look ill? You certainly feel kind of queer! But no! He passes on, still glowering fearfully, and finally he shouts in one heart-arresting moment those blessed words, now common to every tongue — “All raight!” You can go ashore — that is, you can in the sweet by-and-by. The immigration authorities have got to have a fresh look at you first, and then they’ve got to dock the ship. Of course you stand around impatiently and swear at the delays — but by another hour you are free; you dash through the spicy aroma of the great dock; you hail a ten-cent cab, and rattle off through those quaint stage-setting streets to a shore hotel. Dinner on land seems an entrancing prospect, after four days of ship’s food — albeit ship’s food is pretty good.

Fleeting touristical experiences such as mine do not entitle one to speak with the authority of an expert, but rather as one of the scribes. Neverthe-

less I am anxious to say at once that I liked Havana. To be sure, we saw it on the first day under rather restricted circumstances, because it happened to be on February 24 — in other words, the equivalent of July 4 in *Cuba Libre*. Naturally things were shut up and the streets presented long arrays of blank windows. The world was at play. Yet there was no unseemly din. I heard a few firecrackers popping. I saw no *feux d'artifice*. There were horse-races at the great track at Marianao which were said to be splendid, and no doubt there were also cock-fights for those who would see. But for the most part Havana seemed to be taking a nap — with the advantage that it was amply hot enough to warrant any one in seeking a secluded shade to sleep.

Occupying a curving water-front, Havana is easy to get lost in. You soon lose your bearings, much as the untutored do in circular Boston. The streets are very narrow — many of them “one-way” thoroughfares — and the sidewalks are mere ribbons. But these same streets are, so far as I had a chance to examine them, admirably clean. Indeed, the cleanliness of everything struck me as beyond praise. It was not ever thus. General Wood was the man who made Havana a spotless town and converted it from a plague-spot to a paradise — and his fame is preserved, as I have said before, by a tablet

in the handsome Prado boulevard. Better still, the Cubans appear not to have lapsed from what General Wood taught them. They keep clean. Every day is clean-up day in Havana. Now and then, to be sure, the dreaded bubonic breaks out in the lower areas by the water-front, but it is soon curbed. Vessels lying at the pier wear great tin collars on their hawsers to prevent the entrance of wharf-rats bearing noxious fleas.

Narrow streets go with hot climates. There is sure to be a shady side, and the sun's penetrations to the pavement are brief. The Havana architecture is European rather than American — I should say it was Spanish if I knew for certain that there was such a thing. Especially in the case of the cathedral is this a permissible remark, for that ancient and noble edifice is as Spanish as you please, outwardly. Inwardly it is at once not Spanish and most disappointing. One sees it best from the tiny square outside, whence it is a pure delight. Its mammoth bells, hung in tower-niches much too small for them, add to the charm.

Time was when it sheltered the reputed bones of Columbus — although the identity alike of the casket and of its occupant has been disputed. The tomb is empty now, and the supposed Columbus rests in a gaudy catafalque in the huge cathedral of

Seville, borne aloft by four grotesque images which I could wish I had never seen. Little is left to make the denuded Havana cathedral famous, save its façade, some marvelous vestments, and an alleged Murillo.

Down through the midst of the town there runs a broad thoroughfare cut in twain throughout its course by a green parkway. This is the Prado, highly suggestive of the celebrated Ramblas of Barcelona. Up and down its shaded walks pass the people of the city. Its sides are lined with thoroughly handsome buildings, chiefly white. The procession of Fords is interminable. Open carriages are steadily wending their way hither and yon. Those marked with a splash of red paint on the lanterns are open to hire for ten cents; the others double. Very probably the price has advanced, however, since this was written. Carriages are cheap in Havana — and so are cigars; but nothing else. Complaint of the expensiveness of Havana hotels was to be heard on every hand even three or four years ago; and it seems rather too bad that it should be so, because Havana has a glorious chance to attract tourist trade, now that the world is upset.

At the foot of the Prado, next the sea, is the "Malecon" — a broad park where the band plays of an evening. You may hire an iron chair for five



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THE CATHEDRAL, HAVANA

cents and enjoy the balmy air and music until very late. In the intervals between selections there is always the rhythmic wash of the sea, beating ceaselessly against ancient walls that time has mildewed and made splendid. The grim tower of the Morro winks its vigilant eye at you from across the strait. Here of a truth is Europe, and only four days from New York at that — or even in less time — by rail and water combined. Given better hotels — and these are coming fast now — Havana will mint gold out of her manifold beauties as the older world has done. For she is beautiful with the rich dower that gilds Palermo, and Seville, and Granada, and so many other ancient towns for the voyagers from the frozen North.

One is told, indeed, that the town runs "wide open," and that a recent chief of police was murdered as he sat in his carriage because he had sought to close the gambling-hells. Later, they say, his assailant was released from prison and was escorted in triumph through the Prado by a jubilant mob. It need not concern you, however, for of the seamy side of Havana sporting life you will see nothing outwardly. I saw no drunkenness in my brief stay. I was impressed with the ubiquity of the police and the modern traffic-handling at congested corners. I was also impressed — and de-

lighted — by the universality of admirable tobacco. Why not? Is not Havana the cigar capital of the universe? Nowhere grows there tobacco to be compared with that of the *vuelta abajo*! Nowhere else is it so plentiful, or so cheap. You must seek out a fruit stand — but tobacco is ever at your elbow. You will recklessly buy a twenty-five cent cigar in Havana, just because it is the same sort that would cost you fifty cents in New York. As for those unusual smokes that you permit yourself in moments of wild extravagance at home — the kind that in normal times retail for fifteen or twenty cents straight — these are the daily provender of the proletariat! So you revel in them and, of course, you load your trunk for import when you sail away. For our Government will let you bring in fifty cigars duty free — and it will not question the right of your lady wife to bring in another fifty also, assuming that she intends to smoke them herself, no doubt.

I went to a cigar factory, of course. To omit that would be like going to Paris and missing the Louvre. It was a huge four-story block, with magnificent offices below and workrooms of vast extent above. Several hundred men were rolling cigars of various kinds, smoking the while and giving the appearance of not being too clean. Occasionally there is a

lofty desk from which a reader intones the news of the day. But it was not the rolling, so much as the sorting processes, that interested me. Weary-looking women fished the cured leaves out of great tubs and laid them with unerring dexterity each in its appropriate pile according to the color. Weary-looking men took great trays of finished cigars and sorted them, likewise by color, with equally unerring dexterity. Others prepared the raw boxes, into which still others laid the completed product, all nicely banded and jacketed and just the tightest kind of a fit. Even a non-smoker's mouth would water at this sight, and Katrina, who usually regards tobacco as a monster of most frightful mien, was moved first to endure, then pity, then invest. What pretty names they have, too! Who shall resist the music of "colorado maduro," "exceptionales," "regalias," and their train? The man or the woman who can go through a Cuban cigar emporium unmoved is fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils.

On a fleeting and altogether torrid motor ride through the environing country we saw some tobacco growing — but it is n't much to see. I soberly asked the austere young man who guided us if he could n't show me a plant "with the little cigars just forming" — but he looked at me as if I must be a most unusual ass.

The really interesting things, apart from the cigars, are the old things — the quaint streets, the old fortresses of Morro and Cabañas. The average native cicerone, however, does n't grasp that. He wants you to see the modern progress. He shows you the cement factories, the waterworks, and what he calls the "lu-nattick asylum." He reels off statistics like a Chamber of Commerce. Why should you want to see a smelly old place like Morro Castle? Far better see a sugar mill! But in the process you do manage to squeeze in a few miles of pleasant country road through sugar plantations and tobacco farms, where palms and cocoanuts line the way. You are surprised to find that Cuba in February is n't a lush garden of the Lord, but is actually dusty, and in places rather bare and brown.

How it may be in the rest of the island I cannot say, but if you stick to Havana you will probably conclude that the Cubans are n't doing a half-bad job with their newly acquired liberty. They have a fine town and it is annually improving. I should like to live in the Vedado district myself, in a cool, white, deep-verandaed house looking out on the broad blue gulf.

They got us back on the ship at 4 P.M. "to see the doctor." We were supposed to sail at 5. What we

actually did was to lie there all night at the pier unloading steel beams, with periodic crashes and loud yells from the stevedores, until 6.30 the next morning. Somehow or other I managed to fall into a fitful slumber in the early morning watch, to dream of Hendryk Hudson playing at gigantic ninepins among the hills; and through the mist of those dreams I vaguely heard the mate calling lustily to the lighterman —

“Hi, there, Jesus-Maria! How many more bundles you got to take out?”

“Eighteen, sah!”

And shortly after the piously named Maria departed with his deckload of heavy hardware, leaving behind him a holy calm. The engine telegraph rang a merry peal, the screws turned, and Havana began to slip silently away from us. By eight bells it was a memory. The reality was a blue and boisterous sea, stirred to life by a brisk nor'wester from the distant Texas coast.

CHAPTER IV

PANAMA AND THE CANAL

WITH the memory fresh upon me of that night of cacophonous horrors, due to the unloading of innumerable steel girders, I sought out the purser in the morning to tell him that, like Mr. Dooley, I had determined what to do the next time I felt moved to travel. I should "throw two hundred dollars out of the window, put a cinder in my eye, and go to sleep on a shelf in a boiler-works." But I really expected no pity from him. Pursers are a callous lot. He merely directed my attention to the present beauties of the sea, billowing bluely under a stiff nor'wester, and to the myriad flying fish that forever started up out of the water and went winging over the surface like skipping stones.

That night we rounded the western capes of Cuba and headed for Colon and the Canal. The next day and the day following we steamed through the Caribbean under a tropic sun, but fanned always by the northeast trade wind. Never have I seen water more deeply blue — not even in the Adriatic. By right, the Caribbean is a lumpy sea; but for the moment it was delightfully smooth. All

the ship's officers were in white duck uniforms — and as for the passengers they lolled about the decks in the garb of midsummer.

It was then that I fell in with him whom I shall call the Mogul. I had heard him chatting with the captain who received him reverentially. From his interest in the hieroglyphs of the Maya Indians I had set him down as an archæologist. But by subsequent confession he turned out to be the editor of a journal famed in two worlds.

On Monday noon we came in sight of the Isthmus. Big blue mountains loomed ahead and a pall of smoke low on the starboard bow betokened the presence of Colon. Nearer approach revealed long breakwaters presaging sheltered anchorage. Then a broad harbor, the border of which teemed with buildings; and behind them lofty palms. A beautiful new concrete hotel stood invitingly on the point, fanned by a sea breeze in the noonday heat. Vast docks in being and others in construction marked the Atlantic terminus of the watery highway through the Isthmus — and just then came the zealous stewards with their inevitable call to face the doctor in the dining-saloon.

However, he proved a friendly and inviting doctor — a smiling young chap in khaki who merely called your name and beamed a benediction when

you rose and acknowledged your miserable identity. This ordeal over, we were free to go ashore — and we did so with all speed.

I half intended, when I began, to write in lighter vein about the Panama Canal — but I have been forced to abandon the project. It is n't a thing to be treated lightly. It is too big and too noble. To see it, even briefly, gives one a new and a justifiable pride in one's country. If ever you feel moved to pick flaws in the United States and its people, get thee straightway to Panama and behold a gigantic miracle — wrought by America! As the Mogul remarked that day, when we stood awed and dwarfed before the locks of Gatun, "There is nothing that this country cannot do — if it only will!" That is so. But I hasten to remind you that only by denying itself some of the pet nonsense of our blessed unfettered democracy did it triumph at Panama. It was a one-man job, done by the one right man. He was — and his successor still is — supreme there. The usual nonsense about every man being equal in a democracy — with all the pitiful inefficiency that goes with it — has had no place in the Zone. The result is the canal, built by the American people who, for once, had the wit to keep politics out and to put none but the superlatively competent on the job. Mr. Kipling some-

where makes one of his characters say that the big things of history are always one-man jobs. I believe it. The canal is an instance of it.

I take it the tendency is to continue the condition yet a little while. There is still, at all events, an army governor in "the Zone" — that strip of land reaching from ocean to ocean, say, six miles wide, through which runs the canal. This is a purely federal jurisdiction, and the governor is our duly accredited instrument there. It appears that he is supreme — practically speaking. Things do not go at sixes and sevens in the Zone; they are really "run" by the Government. Liquor is barred out. Undesirable characters are kept away. Disease is practically banished, too. Take the average city's death-rate and compare it with that of the Zone, and then reflect honestly on the virtue of slipshod American city government when compared with the virtues of this well-managed autocracy, at which our democracy so wisely and providentially winks! Not that I would have you disbelieve in democracy; for we have to believe in that, or we are doomed. But rather that I can see in this one exceptional suspension of our usual instruments of government an unanswerable argument for our finding the right man and letting him alone, instead of running mad over "initiatives" and "refer-

endums" and contemptibly incapable administrators, whose one qualification is that of being able to bamboozle enough foolish voters to get themselves elected.

I came away from the Zone a better American. So will any one who goes thither. After all, it is a relief once in a while to see a place that is really governed!

In order clearly to understand the Panama Canal, one must first gain a clear conception of what the Isthmus itself is like. The fancy gayly paints a mere narrow neck of land between two great oceans; and as the neck of land is not more than fifty miles wide, it is easy to imagine a simple ditch dug across it, deep enough and wide enough for the passage of ships. But no such conception of the case is accurate.

There is all the difference in the world between the Panama Canal and that at Suez. Suez presented few difficulties by comparison. Count de Lesseps had small trouble in digging there a great sea-level channel through the sands, which, once dug, could be kept open. At Panama, after a considerable debate and prolonged investigation, it was decided to be better not to attempt a sea-level canal, but to build one with locks and dams. Now that it is completed, it seems odd that one should



A JUNGLE RIVER, PANAMA

have thought of doing it in any other way. But one has to take a long and illuminating look at the Isthmus to see why this is so.

The first discoverers of the Isthmus must have found it amazingly impenetrable, for not only is it highly mountainous on its western side, but also it is covered with a dense jungle growth, as different from the open barrenness of Suez as anything could be. No one can appreciate the jungle who has not seen it. An ordinary northern forest with dense underbrush is nothing to it. A jungle is almost a solid mass of vegetation through which one must hack one's way, foot by foot, aided by a *machete* or knife as long as a saber. What is worse, the jungle will grow up behind you almost as fast as you can cut it down. The Spaniards who came first to Panama nevertheless succeeded in cutting a path across to the Pacific and even made a rude paved road, over which they later transported the magnificent loot which they took home from Peru and the Incas. Traces of that road are still visible, despite the jungle.

Years after came Mr. Aspinwall, a New York merchant, with his plan for a railroad. It was built and was successfully operated, although the place was a perfect hotbed of disease. Many of the early settlers of California journeyed by this route. There

was at one time a project for a marine railroad to carry whole ships across, but it came to nothing. The natural project for a ship canal, while always being talked of, brought only futile struggles during something like four hundred years. The Isthmus, while hardly two score miles in width, was terribly obdurate. It was fairly low and level toward the Atlantic shore, but as one went on toward the Pacific one encountered the great ridge which serves to connect the Rockies of the north with the Andes of the south. This must be cut through, of course, and to cut it deep enough to permit a sea-level canal would be a labor sufficient to make the combined tasks of Hercules seem but child's play. To make a cut deep enough for an elevated lock canal, high above the ocean levels, was not so terrible an undertaking — but it was terrible enough.

De Lesseps, fresh from his triumphs at Suez, went down before the natural handicaps of Panama, coupled with a certain amount of grafting at home and abroad. His laborers died like flies in the pestilential air. Ultimately his cars and shovels were abandoned where they stood, and the jungle engulfed them in its sea of impenetrable verdure. Years later came the American engineers, backed by American doctors, and the gigantic task was assailed anew — this time with a success which,

without the doctors, would never have been won.

The present Panama Canal amounts to this: it is a great artificial inland pond — or half pond and half river — flooding the whole interior basin of



CANAL ZONE

the Isthmus and reached from either ocean by climbing three titanic steps. The engineers simply took the greatest local river, the Chagres, and dammed it up, so that it formed a lake in the basin of the land. Then they dug a channel through the

western hills; built locks at either end to lift ships up or let them down; and dug short sea-level inlets from either ocean. For the water in the canal proper, the Chagres is relied upon. To go from Atlantic to Pacific, a ship must be lifted up until it attains the level of the main canal, and at the other end must be let down again.

The result is that the canal does n't look very much as you expect a canal to look. For the first five or six miles as you go in from the Atlantic it lives up to the usual reputation of such things, but at that point you come to the Gatun locks. These are three in number, arranged in "double-track" style, so that ships can be sent both ways without waiting for one another. If you can imagine a series of ordinary canal locks, but magnified several hundred fold and built of concrete so that they present the appearance of mammoth upward steps, you will get an idea of the sight.

The ship glides into the first lock, which is at sea-level, and is shut in there. Then water is admitted from the adjacent lock above and the ship begins imperceptibly to rise. When the basin is filled, the huge gates in front are opened and the vessel is towed into the second chamber. Safely penned in there, it is once again lifted by admitting still more water — and eventually it is thus raised



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THE ARMY TRANSPORT MOUNT VERNON IN THE UPPER CHAMBER, MIRAFLORES LOCKS

aloft to the level of the main canal. But no mere words can give you an idea of the stupendous size of such works as this, capable of accommodating the largest craft afloat and of handling it as if it were a child's toy. The great gates are like the sides of mammoth city blocks. Down inside the concrete walls are tunnels and complicated machinery whereby the mammoth mechanism is operated. Merely turning a switch does it all. A child could operate it — and yet it involves powers such as the ancients imagined to be wielded only by mighty Jove.

Arriving as we did in early afternoon and being pressed for time, as cruising transients must usually be, we elected to motor out to Gatun. In that way you can see the great dam and the three locks of this eastern, or rather northern, end of the canal, and then take the evening train across to Panama at the Pacific end. Gatun is the big show, really. It was there that they built the prodigious dam that holds back the Chagres and thus makes the whole canal. At this end the three locks are grouped — whereas at the other end they are distributed between “Peter McGill” (Pedro Miguel) and Miraflores.

It is a pleasant motor ride out from Colon over a good road besprent with oil. You see nothing

whatever of the canal until you get to Gatun itself. You are delighted, however, with the tropical vegetation that lines the highway, and you are impressed with the neatness and trimness of the habitations that go to form the villages of the Zone. Colon, indeed, is a rather flat, stale, and unprofitable town. It is too new. The houses are all much alike, all painted a monotonous slate-gray that is said to stand the climate better than anything else, and all screened from top to bottom against the baneful mosquitoes that of old made the Isthmus a plague-spot. The conquering of the mosquito was the first step — but he is conquered. To-day there is n't a more healthful spot on earth than the Zone. You leave the town and circle away into the country, and for half an hour you exclaim over the palms and the flowers. Imagine, if you please, wonderful orchids that you would pay untold sums for in the United States, all growing wild as parasites on the wayside trees!

Then comes another village, set on a hill, and beyond it, shining whitely in the tropic sun, the vast concrete stretches of the Gatun locks. This, then, is the canal! You can see it now, stretching away to meet the Atlantic, in a silver ribbon. It looks absurdly narrow, yet two great liners could pass in it, easily. As for the locks, they are chastely

beautiful. If one thing surprised me more than another about this stupendous work it was, as Katrina puts it, that it was "so good-looking." The gashes and scars of constructive work are healed. The design of the works is simple, but dignified and handsome. It is sublimely ship-shape. Nothing is out of place. Nothing is overdone. The railroad station, hard by, is like a villa. So are the official buildings — all of white concrete with red tiled roofs. Art and utility have gone hand in hand.

You alight and wander down over the locks. You cross them on the top of a gigantic gate. How enormous it is you can never guess, because the lock is full of water and you cannot see into the depths. To one side lies the huge inland lake formed by the dam. To the other, the descending line of the dual locks, and beyond them the low-lying channel that dwindles away until it meets the sea.

You are free to walk about and to make pictures. Zone police, who look like soldiers, are everywhere and are very glad to have you talk with them. They find life very dull, indeed, especially in days of suspended traffic, which were very frequent when the slides of earth were forever blocking the canal. It is small fun to sit for hours watching a huge concrete lock basking in a midsummer sun;

yet it must be done, else some designing lunatic might slip a stick of dynamite into the lock and ruin the work of years. The Great War intensified that fear.

On each side of the waterway you will see narrow tracks, and on them some squat, beetle-like electric tractors of unguessable potency. These are used like oxen to tow the vessels from one lock to the next — attached to each side. Only in the canal proper does the passing ship use its own power. In the lock it is moved cautiously by these great but slow-moving engines. You will likewise observe some enormous chains of iron stretched across the entrance to guard against accident if a ship ever should break away from its other apron-strings and run wild. And up at the lake end — the one blemish on all the chaste beauty of the concrete — are some vast steel frameworks containing the emergency gates. On extreme occasions, all else failing, a turn of the wrist would swing those gigantic structures across the canal and drop gates into the aperture below. This has been done only for drill purposes — and of course for the movies. The chance of needing the emergency gate is remote — but the Government takes no chances. So far as one can see, every contingency is provided for, except “acts of God.”

You are hardly conscious of the dam at all, but

you may walk out across its gigantic top and see the spillway provided to let the Chagres run free whenever the lake is full. I should have liked to see it in the rainy season, when it is pouring out in full cataract — but on our visit it was almost dry. Our captain says that the seasons in Panama are “nine months rainy and three months wet” — but for the moment the showers forbore and the level of the lake was not quite up to the point where the river must pour out its bounteous surplus. Meanwhile a cooling breath of air streamed in from the sea and made it a perfect June afternoon.

About five o'clock the train comes along and you can go over to Panama by rail in the fading light. It is a fine American railroad, much broader than our roads at home and served by oil-burning engines that allow you open windows and freedom from dirt. It is a wonderful ride, with the great wall of the solid jungle coming closely down to the right-of-way — a jungle of queer trees, queer birds, and abundant flowers. Now and again you pass a tiny hamlet, composed of old, discarded freight cars, all mounted on stilts and sheltering agglomerations of negroes. Poor and squalid as these habitations are, you will see pots of tropical flowers growing by the door — flowers that at home would cost you a dollar a blossom at the lowest!

For a time you skirt the edges of the artificial lake — a lake as big as a county. Out of its waters tower the dying limbs of forests of trees. The water has invaded what was once the jungle and has killed it. In time these bare branches will all be gone; but for the present they are pathetic in their abject and miserable nakedness, for miles and miles. Of the actual steamer channel through the lake you can see nothing, for the road winds far away from it. But as you near the western hills, where the great lake ends and only a narrow channel serves to give passage to ships through the bulk of the mountain ridge, you come upon it again. It is here that one finds all the trouble — the slides due to the hills of Culebra. A hint of the mischief is seen in the passing of dredging scows, with now and then the towering bulk of a dredge itself — the greatest in the world. But of the Culebra Cut — now renamed for Engineer Gaillard — you see nothing. It is hidden by the hills, and its inspection must await another day.

CHAPTER V

THE ZONE AND THE REPUBLIC

THAT glorious condition in which you cannot tell where one thing leaves off and another begins is well typified in the situation at the Isthmus where, with a harmony that is subject to change and correction without notice, the United States maintains a strip subject to its federal jurisdiction straight through the midst of the new-hatched and as yet hardly fledged Republic of Panama.

The republic was born somewhat prematurely, if memory serves, but not altogether unexpectedly to Mr. Roosevelt's watchful and determined administration. There was n't much trouble. And possibly in consideration of the watchfulness which permitted this painless separation of the new republic from the older entity of Colombia, the United States acquired right, title, and interest to a six-mile belt from sea to sea — six miles wide and perhaps fifty miles long — in the center of which it might dig its mammoth ship canal to unite the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans.

It was not our fortune to see very much of the Atlantic end of the Zone, or to pass any time at the

Washington Hotel which the Federal Government maintains on the Atlantic side in a location which ought to insure a most delicious ocean breeze. Christopher Columbus lives anew in the dual names of the terminal town — Cristobal, where our Government holds sway, and Colon, where the sovereignty vests in Panama. Cruisers like ourselves are slaves of the ship. We may see what time permits and no more. And as the Pacific side is infinitely the finer of the two for those whose stay must be brief, thither we betook ourselves, as has been said, by the wings of the five-o'clock train, reaching the governmental hotel, the Tivoli, in season for a belated dinner.

I first "stared at the Pacific" by night over a seawall. In the gloom it looked very much as the Atlantic had done on the other side of the Isthmus. However, like Byron, I felt — or thought I felt — no common glow. The waters might make much the same swish as they do in all other ports; the salty smell might be the same; but after all this was the Pacific, a vast ocean which I had never before beheld — the selfsame ocean that so abashed stout Cortez by revealing that he had n't reached China after all.

We had driven down from the hotel through the dusk to see the searchlight drill at the forts — for when they are playing you can see the various islands

in the Bay of Panama picked out with shafts of burning light, and the spectacle is said to be very fine. As it fell out we were much too late for the show. The Pacific, indeed, lay before us in all its mystery, murmuring gently as it washed against the break-water. Far out on its obscure bosom were the lights of an anchored ship; but of the islands and the sea nothing was seen. Overhead the stars burned brilliantly in a cloudless tropic sky. A constellation fondly believed by us to be the Southern Cross, but later proved to be a fraudulent substitute, dignified the remote horizon.

The night was cool. Officers who have spent years in Panama inform me that they do not recall a night in all their residence when it was not cool enough to make a blanket welcome. Hot it may be — and is — by day; yet even so it is never so intolerably hot as it often is in the worst part of a northern summer. At night you may be sure that it will be cool enough for entire comfort. I forget the daily average temperature, but it is something between 80° and 90°. This, I am told, is true alike in midwinter and midsummer. So far as the thermometer goes all seasons are alike at the Isthmus. You might go down there in July and be no hotter than you would be if you went in January. The difference is only one of moisture. The greater part of the year — spring,

summer, and fall, let us say — is distinctly rainy. The winter — at least three months of it — is dignified by the term “dry season” because it rains only now and then instead of bringing assurance of a daily downpour in the afternoon.

The real wear and tear of life on the Isthmus is not due to terrific extremes of heat, then, but to persistent heat of a very endurable degree. It is summer all the time — a good, hot, reasonable sort of midsummer, but without any welcome let-up save for the coolness of the night and the persistence of the breeze, on which latter you may depend for most of the year and throughout nearly every day. In the early afternoon it drops away, and for a space the world remains quietly in the shade; but at four o'clock it springs up anew and life again begins to stir.

I have a confused recollection of the goodly city of Panama, which is the chief town of the new Republic of Panama, and the guardian of the Pacific side of the narrow Isthmus. It is entirely to the east of the canal entrance and from the waterfront of the city you cannot see the canal mouth at all. Which reminds me of the fact that the Canal and Isthmus together have the disconcerting habit of not running in the direction you naturally expect. If you are like me, you think of the Isthmus as

running north and south, while the Canal runs east and west. Instead, it is the other way about, roughly speaking. East of the city of Panama is a sizable gulf, and the sun rises out of it — which is thoroughly subversive of all your ideas. It is actually possible at the proper season to behold the sun rising out of the Pacific and setting in the Atlantic. A most remarkable place, that Isthmus! You will have little help from the ordinary maps of the canal because they usually ignore the common custom of making the north come at the top of the page. But you must lay aside your doubts and accept what I tell you. The sun does n't really rise in the south; it only seems to.

It is hard, when you are in the Canal Zone, to tell where the Zone leaves off and the Republic of Panama begins. The difference is a good deal like that between Boston and Roxbury. Nevertheless, there is an appreciable distinction. The one is United States jurisdiction and the other is Panamanian — or, as Professor Hart would put it, "Panamese." The line between is imaginary but important. You understand that the United States has jurisdiction over a strip of country about six miles broad from ocean to ocean, through the middle of which runs the canal. This affects you, as a tourist, only when you are in the terminal cities of Colon and Panama.

The United States part of Colon is called Cristobal; and the federal share of Panama is called Ancon. The only visible difference on crossing the imaginary line is that the policemen are of a different aspect and uniform — and that there is an absence in the Zone of signs announcing the sale of *licores*. In short, the Zone is as “dry” as a covered bridge, while Panama proper is not. Steamers tying up in Colon are subjected to a penalty of one thousand dollars if they open their bars and sell a drop of liquor while there. Prohibition prohibits in the Zone. Laws are enforced. Nobody is at all concerned for fear of alienating any votes. If you go to Panama you’ll heed the rules and regulations. It is a place where an efficiency of Teutonic proportions obtains all the time — and I like it.

Out of my confused remembrances of the city of Panama stands out a noise of bells. The carriages all carry bells which have a pleasant two-toned peal. As you roll along the driver is perpetually sounding a warning note — a melodious ding-dong, not too loud nor yet too soft, but at once restful and admonitory. The motors have horns and other devices as here, but I suspect the drivers learned to use them with one eye on the nerves of “the Colonel,” as they used to call Governor Goethals. It is n’t likely he would stand for any needlessly nerve-racking nui-

sances. The carriages are content, at all events, with the bells. Also the carriages are reasonably cheap. The cab-tariff used to be ten cents a person; "ten cents gold" as they say, meaning ten cents in real money. Panamanian money is only half real. A quarter is as big as our fifty-cent piece.

There are no very conspicuous "lions" to be seen in Panama. You find it a good deal larger town than you expected, and reasonably old, too, wherein it differs from Colon at the other end of the canal. Colon is brand-new and garish. Panama is ancient and well established. The only change from the older days is that now the town is kept scrupulously clean. Among the sights one sees the remnant of an ancient church, which is ruined save for the persistence of a tremendously long and astonishingly flat brick arch. That arch, plus a Nicaraguan postage stamp, decided the location of the canal. For one thing it was evident that the survival of the arch betokened a reasonable gentleness in the Panama brand of earthquake, else it would have been destroyed ages ago. As for the postage stamp, it was of a Nicaraguan issue, and it bore the vignette of an active volcano. At the moment Nicaragua was boasting of her entire freedom from all volcanic disturbance and arguing that she ought to get the canal — when along came a senator with this self-

damnatory stamp! It proved that there really was a volcano in Nicaragua, and within a year of the exposure of the fact that volcano erupted and destroyed a neighboring wharf which was also shown in the picture on the stamp. Little things are always altering the big things in the course of history.

Panama is a pleasantly foreign sort of town. It is n't quite so foreign-looking as Havana, but it has a mellowness and a Spanishness that will serve. For contrasts you need only hire a cab and be driven up into the purlieu of Ancon and Balboa Heights — the residence district of the Powers-That-Be in the Zone. There you will find first a mammoth park laid out in ascending terraces for the uses of the United States Hospital. It is a hospital in a paradise — and to be fully American I ought to add that it cost five million. Your negro driver is voluble as you jog through the well-kept roads that serve it. His chief awe is for the new and handsome crematorium — “whah dey buhns de daid folks, sah, after theym daid. Usted to bury dem in de cemetery, but now dey buhns dem. Yessah, jest nachelly buhns dem up, like dey was wood. Lan' too valu'ble fo' no mo' buryin'. Dey buhns dem, an' den dey has n't only a little bit o' ashes.” He is impressed, and recurs often to the subject. It seems that there's a new cemetery “out on Corozal road” to which the

bodies of the martyred saints of other days, who had been interred whole but in the path of the canal, were removed when the dirt began to fly; but efficiency decrees the incineration of those who shall die hereafter.

Meanwhile, enlivened by the mortuary reflections of the driver, you amble gently up the winding road through the shade of sheltering palms, past trim hospital buildings nestling amid a lush greenery, and you eventually emerge on the heights of Balboa, where the governor lives, and the assistant governor, and any quantity of subalterns connected officially with the Zone. It is new yet, but beautiful. There are tennis courts baking in the sun, and gardens adjoining trim houses. You look down also upon the busy life of the canal itself — a ribbon stretching to the sea from a great fissure in the inland hills. Time will gradually heal the scars that the digging has made in that cavernous vale below — indeed, it has begun to do so. For the moment, however, there is rather more evidence of the work of man lying at your feet than there is elsewhere eastward along the canal. The railroad is in evidence below, and great docks. But from up here in the heights they look like toys, and all about you is a beautiful residential neighborhood where it must be pleasant to live. In the midst is a simple but dignified administration

building, and a huge motor 'bus is forever plying up and down between it and the Government's great and admirable hotel, the Tivoli, in town.

If the present city of Panama seems old, it is not nearly so old as the original Panama, to which you may motor over a road that leaves something still to be desired. This bit of ancient history lies eight miles to the southeastward and there is little left of it save a massive cathedral tower and a graceful bridge half hidden in the jungle. Sir Henry Morgan the buccaneer destroyed this former city in 1671. He did a thorough job, leaving hardly one stone on another. The jungle did the rest. Yet even the jungle did not, in all those intervening years, obliterate entirely the ancient Spanish road over which the treasures of Peruvians and others were transported to the waiting galleons of the Philips. For the bridge is a part of that old original thoroughfare across the Isthmus. The only present inhabitant of Old Panama is a saloon — an admirable adjunct to picnic parties from the city. Palms wave in the wind, and the Pacific dimples at your feet as tranquilly as it did when stout Cortez first descried it from his distant peak in Darien.

For the moment the world's interest in the Panama Canal centers in the Culebra Cut — the place where the great ditch cuts through the continental back-



THE RUINS, OLD PANAMA

bone of hill and mountain. It is here that the gigantic slides of earth have occurred, resulting in the temporary suspension of transit by water through the canal. As you ride along in the train — which does not pass very near Culebra — you can see one of the hills that has been causing trouble. It looks precisely like a great mound of ice-cream, into which one has thrust a huge knife slicing off one side. That side of the hill has slumped down a bit — and then stopped. It has left a yellow space between its top and the original top of the hill. Presumably it will eventually drop still farther. In the process it has either slid itself into the channel of the canal that passes below, or has forced the earth in the bed of the canal upward. There have been several such alterations in the surface at various other points in the vicinity. It is likely that there will be repeated instances of it — until the condition of the terrain is such that the land can remain permanently at rest. How long that will be no one dares to predict.

The hope of the engineers is that the conditions favorable to equilibrium may be reached before very long. There is presumably a natural slope which, when finally established, will suffice to prevent further slipping of material. One is familiar with the situation presented by a heap of sand. If you bring

up a fresh barrow of sand and dump it on the pile, it will run down the side until it has established its appropriate slope. Then it will stop. Somewhat the same thing may be seen when you remove a shovel-ful of coal from the heap remaining in your bin, in the process of replenishing the furnace. Eventually you will start a very noisy sort of slide, comparable in its small way to those the diggers have produced in the Culebra Cut.

In the case of the cut the process is complicated by the fact that the substrata of earth and rock are in places soft and almost liquidly unstable. It is said that in one place the substratum is virtually a bed of volcanic mud which has never solidified. As the digging progressed, the downward pressure of the surrounding hills became too great and the crust gave way beneath them, forcing the mud upward into the bed of the canal. Hopefully in the process of digging, this inequality of competing pressures will be removed and the sliding stopped.

At all events, the engineers propose to keep right on dredging until the requisite equilibrium is attained. I talked with one young man who operated a dredge in this vicinity. He said that they would often dredge along their section leaving behind them a channel forty-five feet deep — and then would return only to find it filled in again from below to the

depth of only a dozen feet. But they keep pegging away at it. They must. Having dug away so much already, they can always dig more. They can dig it all away if they have to, but their aim is simply to bring about a readjustment in the geological conditions such as will satisfy Dame Nature. Until that is done, the abrupt sides of the adjacent mountains pierced by the canal will frequently shift without even the intervention of any earthquake or convulsion of Nature.

But what a glorious thing it will be when it is completely done! And what an obligation upon us to defend it and keep it forever open as a peaceful servant of God's world! It has been a gigantic task, the obstacles in the path of which are by no means all removed. One recalls the ancient story of the attempt to cut a canal at Cnidus, where the particles of rock from the chisels blinded the workmen's eyes and led to a consultation of the oracle. They got this answer:

"Seek not to make a channel, nor dig the isthmus through;
Zeus would have made your land an island, had it pleased him
so to do."

Suppose some worthy but old-fashioned person like Mr. Bryan had sent to some modern Delphi on learning of the slides at Panama, and been told that "God would have made the United States an island if he had wanted it done"! Do you suppose he would have been so impious as to pursue the work?

CHAPTER VI

A PANAMANIAN INTERLUDE

FROM Cristobal the cruising steamers take either one of two routes. Part of them turn eastward and seek the northern ports of South America. The rest turn westward along the shore of Panama and ultimately arrive at Port Limon, the principal port of Costa Rica, with possibly a call at the way-stations of Bocas del Toro and Almirante. It developed that the latter was to be our portion — for which I was not sorry, as it gave us the only possible view of the Republic of Panama, aside from what one may see in the immediate vicinity of the Zone. For travel in Panama is by no means easy. None of these tropical republics can claim to be provided with highways. Trails through the wooded hills, navigable only on muleback, or chance rivers where one may use a small power boat, appear to afford the only means of locomotion when the *presidente* makes an official progress through his domains.

Nevertheless this republic is no inconsiderable country. It is something like four hundred miles long, and at its very widest it is n't more than one

hundred miles wide. Its total area is around thirty-two thousand square miles. As an independent political unit Panama dates officially from 1904, following the abrupt revolution which Colombia always insisted the Roosevelt Administration had covertly engineered. As a known part of the earth, however, Panama surpasses most of us. Columbus landed there in 1502; and of course the curious geographical situation at the narrowest part of the neck joining the two continents made the region of "Darien" a natural center for the traffic which Spain entered upon in her quest for precious minerals in the New World. Despite various abortive efforts at setting up an independent Isthmian republic, Panama continued for the most part an isolated appendage of Colombia down to the time when the Americans seriously undertook the project of digging the canal.

At that juncture, possibly because the people of Panama felt that the Colombian authorities were in danger of throwing away their chances by undue haggling over canal terms, revolution broke out and an independent government was hastily proclaimed. This was on the 3d of November, 1903. With a haste which Colombia has always argued was unseemly and indicative of a potential collusion, the United States recognized this new

government November 6. In fact derisive critics have intimated that this recognition came very near to antedating the actual revolution! At all events, the Republic of Panama was abruptly born and was abruptly organized — and even France accorded it an official recognition within four days after independence had been formally recognized in Washington. Nor was this speed without precedent. Brazil's independent government was recognized within two days after its declaration. One is prone to conclude that while the upheaval in Panama was not unexpected by Washington, it was perfectly genuine and was by no means the first movement of its kind. In one argument it has also been defended as a mere "resumption of independence" from one of the former efforts in the same direction.

Provocation for the step was abundant. Colombia had been negotiating for the building of a canal by the United States and an arrangement, supposed to be mutually satisfactory, had been made. In the meantime a determined effort of a rival nature was being made to locate the prospective canal in Nicaragua. The Colombian Government, possibly believing that the bid for the concession would be raised, suddenly turned about, refused to ratify the treaty already negotiated, and adjourned. It was this which precipitated the re-

volt in Panama, which province had never greatly loved Colombia at best and which now saw a chance that the canal would go to Nicaragua after it was almost in her grasp. It happened that an energetic American was at that time President of the United States, to whom the necessity of assailing the isthmian problem was apparent. It was done — and on the whole it is hard to regret it, although Colombia's plea for recompense has commanded sympathy.

At present, then, the Republic of Panama is a perfectly recognized member of the family of nations — cut in twain at the waist by the Canal Zone. The government vests in a president, chosen by direct popular vote for a term of four years, and assisted by a cabinet of five. There is a legislature composed of a single house which meets regularly on a biennial basis. Eight provinces are comprised in the republic, each province having its governor. Industrially speaking, the chief products are bananas, cocoanuts, sugar cane, and various other tropical woods and fruits. Curiously enough, the so-called "Panama" hat seems to be made in its best estate in other, but adjacent, countries.

So much of didacticism I trust I may be pardoned before taking up the tale of further venturings in the outskirts of this ancient but still juvenile

country. A little of it we had seen in the brief drive out toward the ruins of Old Panama. It remained to take the railroad once more back to the Atlantic side where the ship was announced as ready to sail.

With the arrival of the evening train from Panama, the steamer prepared to go. There was some delay because Mrs. X., who was gayly turned out with her twenty-fifth new gown and fifth new hat, could n't be located at all among the passengers. It was discovered by telephone that she was at the Hotel Washington and had just ordered some *potage suprême à la Miraflores* with the idea of dining in great content ashore. Frenzied emissaries from the ship tore her away from the table, and the gangplank rose behind her heels. We were off.

However, we did n't go far. Late in the warm evening, as we all lounged on deck sipping lemonade and smoking the spoils of Havana, some one remarked that we seemed to be going very slowly, and some one else who looked over the side announced that we were not going at all. The chief engineer showed a head over the stairway; and the captain, who had just been giving us some superheated views of the Great War, promptly dived down the companionway after him. The rest of us "looked at each other with a wild surmise." It

was evident that something had gone wrong below. The captain on his return merely remarked that, at all events, it was n't a submarine and disappeared once more with a reassuring grin. The while there arose from the depths of the ship the sound of hammers, and occasionally a voice raised in supplication for the immediate condemnation from on high of something that apparently was n't working right in the engine-room. Possibly they were shipping a new tire. It sounded that way. One by one the feminine passengers faded away with affected nonchalance to their cabins, while the men gathered in quiet little knots, with equally affected nonchalance, secretly wondering whether, if we had to take to the boats, they would be seen to be brave. Fortunately the sea was like glass, and we were n't more than thirty miles off Cristobal, anyhow. At this point the tinkle of the engine-telegraph was heard and shortly the reassuring thud of the propellers. Gayety returned, more lemonade was ordered, more cigars. What more delicious on the last night of February than to be sitting in spotless pongee clothing, on a spotless deck, surrounded by creature comforts, fair women and brave men, with stars of unwonted brilliancy beaming overhead?

Eight bells the next morning — one of the times

when the ship's bells consent to toll an hour that is easily understood by landsmen — found us approaching the shore again at the extreme north-western end of the Republic of Panama — a wonderful shore that looked as if it had stepped out of a story-book. The misty mountains far inland looked just like any mountains elsewhere; but the immediate foreground, with its strip of yellow sand followed immediately by the dense growth of the tropic jungle, satisfied every requirement of the fancy as the setting for O. Henry's "Cabbages and Kings," or "Treasure Island," or any of those delightful whimsies.

One or two rocks, fantastically carved by centuries of wind and wave, stood up out of the water off the point. A palm-clad island lay just before. Between it and a jutting lowland appeared an inlet which, on nearer view, was seen to broaden to a vast enclosed lagoon. This was Bocas del Toro. I speak subject to correction, but I think that means "Mouth of the Bull." My Spanish, never very fluent, is terribly rusty in these days of prolonged disuse. I tried it on various persons in Panama, but they were unmoved. I oiled it up again later and used it a bit in San José, but with only a qualified success. There seems to be something wrong with my pronunciation. Perhaps it is too truly

Castilian for the degenerate dialects of the Central Americas!

As the lagoon opened out, it revealed new beauties, the chief of which lay in the wondrous extent of this sheltered bay with its numerous islands — all story-book islands — and its immediately surrounding hills covered with dense jungle. Here we dropped anchor, with the background of tropical verdure all about. The island that served nearly to fill the entrance from the sea was, I later learned, the very one upon which Columbus, after one of his voyages, careened his ships in order to scrape their barnacled bottoms; wherefore to this day it bears the name of Careening Key.

A few hundred yards away lay the hamlet of Bocas del Toro, attractive enough when seen from the distance, but rather obviously composed of houses of corrugated iron. Corrugated iron is the favorite building material in these parts. They seldom bother to paint it. It has the merit of being durable and waterproof, and above all of not splintering to bits in the average earthquake — which is highly important in a land where the earth is trembling a large part of the time. The captain said there would be a launch along by-and-by to take those ashore who wished a nearer view; but by this time I was in confidential relations with

him and he gave me a private and personal hint that I'd much better remain aboard ship where it was cool, and incidentally save a half-dollar. His opinion was that "all these towns looked their level best over the stern of the steamer as you were going away."

Meanwhile we became aware of a piratical-looking sloop bearing down upon us, all loaded down with gypsy men. I never saw more human beings crowded on a smaller craft. They were all standing, because there was no room to do anything else. Elevated above them was a single figure — a man, who was apparently making an impassioned speech. He waved his arms and gesticulated madly. All Spanish peoples are born with the oratorical gift, and this representative of the race had it abundantly. At regular intervals his harangue was interrupted by his auditors with a staccato cheer. The effect was like this:

"Gabble, gabble, gabble, gabble — "

"VIVA!"

"Gabble, gabble, gabble, gabble — "

"VIVA!"

It appeared that it was a political meeting. There was pending what passes in Panama for a presidential election, and there was in town a delegate representing the aspirations of one of the national



WAYSIDE COCKPIT, PANAMA

candidates. His devoted adherents were seeing him off and were punctuating his remarks with whole-hearted "Vivas" that presaged victory and a triumph for the right. This craft, with its motley but vocal company, circled round and round the steamer. Meantime the speech never faltered. The "Vivas" came with faithful regularity. And when speaking's best was done, to the band they left the rest — a wonderful band of three pieces.

Its music left much to be desired — but after all it was better than "the professor's." The professor — so dubbed by the Mogul — came aboard our craft the night before, at Cristobal. He was a flamboyant darkey, dressed in those indescribable blue clothes that his race delights in, and possessed of an insatiable desire to manipulate the keys of the ship's hard-worn piano. I suppose he slept a few hours at some time during the night; but all the rest of the time he was seated in what the ship's plan persisted in calling the "Music-Room," hammering a long-suffering upright that had weathered many a gale and evidently felt it. With unabated zeal he tore from the depths of the unresisting instrument that curious brand of melody that seems to be sacred to the uses of the moving-picture shows. In self-defense the passengers had taken the wings of the morning and dwelt in the uttermost

parts of the ship — only to be assailed anew with the strains of a tuba, a snare drum, and a flageolet, playing what may well have been the Panamanian national hymn, although it may be that in this latter assumption I am doing a serious injustice to a great and friendly people.

Those who were going ashore doubtless had to see some sort of a doctor, and I trembled lest the medical authority overhear the “professor” at his devastating worst and deny him his exequetur — or imprimatur, or exeat, or whatever it is they require as a credential — on the score of his incurable appetite for ragtime. But he appeared at last, resplendent in all his finery, and got into the shore launch unrestrained. We were safe — except that the pessimistic Mogul apprehended he was “only getting off there for the day” and would rejoin us when we came back again from the other end of the lagoon at night. Some one is always taking the joy out of life!

Those who took the trip to the shore and return came back very hot and by no means impressed by Bocas as a City Beautiful. They did not even attempt to crow over those of us who had stayed aboard and kept fairly cool. Instead they sank into chairs and ordered things from the smoke-room bar — for Bocas had no silly rule imposing a fine

of one thousand dollars on ships that pass if they happen to open the ice-chest to the seeker after humectants.

Innumerable bags of cocoa were being tucked away in the hold while we lay basking under the tropic sun. They were loaded by hand, by Carib negroes. Candor compels me to confess that the Carib negro is not a dynamo of energy. Three heavy bags and then a whole rest seems to be the way his symphony is scored. However, we should not blame him. If we lived in a town where it never gets lower than 85° and frequently more than 92° in the shade, summer or winter, we should probably be somewhat less industrious than we are.

Eventually the last sack was put in, the anchor came muddily up, the propellers turned again—and we steamed off up the ever-narrowing bay a dozen miles more to the banana settlement of Almirante. Once again subject to correction, I affirm that this means “Admiral.” I suspect that it belongs, body, soul, and spirit, to the United Fruit Company. It has too trim and prosperous a look to belong to anybody else, and there was an array of nice-looking college boys on the dock, who had all the earmarks of being employed by the fruit corporation. The sight of these clean and alert young fellows

in shirt-sleeves gladdened me. They appeared to advantage against the general shiftlessness of the native-born.

Almirante itself is n't much to see. There is no visible town. To be sure, there is a toy railroad which penetrates the wilderness and collects bananas for a living; but at the moment it was n't working. Our ship's mission there was not to be ministered unto, but to minister. In other words, we had brought a deckload of steel rods and bars to be delivered at this port, as well as innumerable boxes of tomato catsup, barrels which from their labels I suspect contained bottled beer, and other provender essential to the upkeep of a hard-working force of healthy young men in a tropic clime. The steel rods took the longest. I timed the Carib boys who handled them, and discovered that from the time a steel rod was first lifted to the moment of its ultimate deposit on the near-by handcar there regularly elapsed one minute, twelve and two-fifths seconds. There were perhaps six hundred rods. Now, Johnnie, at what hour did the steamer leave Almirante? Take your time!

Oh, no! of course! How stupid of me! I could n't expect you to answer that correctly because I forgot to tell you what time the unloading started. Well, never mind! We did n't in fact leave until

nearly eight, when it was as dark in the lagoon as the inside of an infidel. The jungle hills of the surrounding land faded out until they looked just like any other hills. At last even the hills sank back into the dark. But the boat managed to find her way out into the bay again, and in the course of an hour we had picked up once more the garish lights of Bocas del Toro — quite a town, if you see it in the evening. The beauty and chivalry of the place came out in boats to see us and enliven an otherwise uneventful day. A lighter also drew alongside and bestowed upon us a few more sacks of cocoa to take home.

All the while the Mogul hung expectantly over the gangway scrutinizing every person who came aboard with the avowed expectation of seeing the musical “professor” return. The suspense was awful. However, at the end the whistle blew, the visitors were ordered ashore, the launches departed, the gangplank was drawn up — and we began once again to move. The “professor” had not come back.

“Thank God,” said the Mogul.

CHAPTER VII

IN COSTA RICA

AT dawn we were abreast of Port Limon, and by breakfast-time were made fast to a precarious-looking pier which thrust its way out to sea. The incoming breakers spent themselves beyond, but the pulsations of the ocean made the vessel rise and fall spasmodically at her dock, chafing the fenders and causing some speculation as to whether the numerous ropes which made her fast would last all day.

It was our uttermost port of call, but it was destined to be a sojourn reasonably prolonged and sufficient to give all hands a chance for pilgrimage into the remote interior of Costa Rica.¹

¹ Costa Rica is a republic lying between Nicaragua and Panama, containing about 22,000 square miles and divided into seven provinces, with a total population of about half a million. Owing to the great differences in altitude due to the highly mountainous character of the country, climatic conditions and vegetation are remarkably varied. The loftiest peaks are well over 11,000 feet, and at least four of these mountains are still actively volcanic at infrequent periods. The original settlement of Costa Rica as a colony of Spain was made in 1540; and down practically to 1821 its existence was perhaps the most wretchedly miserable among many such colonies in Spanish possessions. In the year last mentioned, Costa Rica traded her dependence upon Spain for voluntary dependence upon Mexico — and still later formed one of a congeries of weak Central American

The literature dispensed by the United Fruit Company invites you to believe that the name of Port Limon signifies "citrus fruits." This seems to me an unworthy attempt to disguise by a euphemism the fact that it really means "Port Lemon." Why not face the truth?

To be sure, the name of "lemon" has of recent years tended to a certain derisive use, but that need not divert us from an admiration for the useful fruit — companion of our summer joys and alleviator of our winter ills. Undoubtedly the lemon is a sour thing, especially after it has been kept. Right off the tree it is not half bad. Besides, I do not now recall that I saw a single lemon growing in Costa Rica, whereof Port Limon is an important eastern outlet. But that does n't prove that there are no lemon groves there.

I am not so sure that Port Limon comes by its states unconnected with the Mexican rule; but in 1830 complete independence was established, and since that time, largely because of the intelligent fostering of banana culture by American capital, the prosperity of the land has immeasurably increased. It is the boast of Costa Ricans that their political system has been less the subject of revolutionary change than is true in some of the neighboring countries; but it is to be recorded that the president mentioned in the following pages was ousted by proceedings more or less revolutionary, though bloodless, in 1917, leaving the world in some doubt as to the actual stability of republican government there. There is a single-chamber Congress of forty-three members, and the president, theoretically, holds for a four-year term. Bananas, cocoa, coffee, hides, lumber, and some precious ores form the bulk of the exports.

name without certain other reasons. As a harbor it leaves much to be desired. It is not exactly a harbor, anyway. A point of land and a rather immature island afford all the shelter there is, and under the impulse of the northeast trade there is generally a heavy swell running into the bay, which makes the steamers heave and strain at their hawsers even when made fast to the pier. I have seen better protected anchorages than those afforded by the roadstead off Limon. However, we must take creation as it is handed over to us. Limon is the eastern terminus of the transcontinental railroad system of Costa Rica — total length of said system about two hundred miles. From what I hear, Limon is a good deal nicer place than is the Pacific terminal, Punta Arenas (Sandy Point).

Away down there in the tropics, say ten degrees north of the Equator, it is bound to be hot all the year round. Limon is usually cooking, steaming hot. We found it so even at nine in the morning when we descended the ship's side and walked a quarter-mile along the cement docks to reach the mainland proper. A sunshade was in order, and as Xenophon observed during the celebrated march of the Ten Thousand, "it was for a protection if one journeyed with something black before his eyes." The sun glared down on the concrete and

shimmered from the inevitable corrugated iron roofs. But once the town was reached, there appeared a marvelous little park, hard by the sea, in the depths of which there was darkness and cool shade. After the long and torrid promenade along the wharves this, to quote Browning's Croisic pilot, was "Paradise for Hell." The ladies of the party disappeared into the welcome shadow of the palms and eucalypti with shrill psalms of delight. For the men there was a man's work to be done in the way of buying railroad tickets for the journey up to San José.

I should explain that Costa Rica is the next country west of the Republic of Panama, occupying the entire continent — or what remains of it at that point — between the Atlantic and Pacific. It is a bit wider than the Isthmus, but still not terribly wide. What it lacks in breadth, however, it makes up in thickness. It boasts a stretch of coastal plain on either sea, and then rises abruptly into mountains that richly deserve the name. Indomitable industry — personified by the Fruit Company in this case — has constructed a railroad leading up from the coast into the upland of the interior; and indomitable perseverance — also personified by the United Fruit — keeps the railroad there. This is no light task in a country where

earthquakes are common and rainy seasons prevalent; for the railroad follows a river bottom up the steep sides of a trio of volcanic peaks, and it is subject to vehement changes of grade without notice. Washouts are the chief trouble, as at some seasons they are of almost daily occurrence. Now and again transit is interrupted for weeks at a time. The journey of one hundred and seven miles from Limon to San José requires about six hours.

Now the good ship Metapan was due to lie at Limon four days loading bananas for the people of the United States; and as no one who could help it wanted to stick around and bake in Limon for so long a time, the ship's company all sought the railroad station in a body. The ticket-office, of course, was not open. If you have had experience with Spanish countries you would know that without my telling you. In Spain the ticket-seller opens his wicket about fifteen minutes before the train is due to leave, and no sooner, even if he knows there is a file outside as long as the breadline, or a queue waiting to buy tickets for the World's Series. Wherefore, as I said, there was a man's work to be done. The Mogul and I deployed stragetically, and let the line form. I hunted around the depot platform until I had located a most obliging young man of American appearance who said he would tele-



IN THE BANANA COUNTRY

phone inside to the ticket-agent and arrange for our seats in the observation car. The Mogul, his pockets full of letters to the local authorities, had meantime disappeared in the head office of the company. It was he who did the real business; for presently he emerged tattooed all over with the courtesies of the road, the freedom of this and all other cities, an assurance of rooms in San José's leading hotels, a prospect of personal introduction to the President of the Republic, and the comfortable knowledge that for to-day at least neither his money nor mine was any good whatever. No one would take it. Not without reason do I refer to him as the Mogul.

Then the train backed in. If the railroad at Panama had been wider than any road I ever saw before, this one was narrower than most. The rails were one yard apart. It resembled very much to the eye the railroad that runs down to Revere Beach and Lynn, and I heard the conductor address the engineer by the highly Oriental name of Mike. There was an immediate and perspiring rush for the cars. There was a jumble of suitcases, porters, and passengers in the narrow aisles. Yet by some magic the snarl was all untangled and we were perfectly ready to go not more than five minutes after the scheduled hour for starting. A momentary

confusion, indeed, was caused by the announcement that Verdun had fallen — because one of the party was a French patriot and fainted away at the news. But when a breathless young man a moment later dashed in with the glad news that this report was untrue, he revived; and the train clacked out of the yard headed for the hills.

For perhaps twenty-five miles the railroad ran through a riotously fertile plain given over to banana culture. For a considerable proportion of the way the line skirted the sea. To the right, rows of enormous breakers rushed rank after rank upon the beach and roared in foam almost up to the line of rails. To the left was the density of the jungle, broken here and there by clearings. Bananas were everywhere. On the whole the banana tree is not a tidy one. Its broad leaves break off and turn brown. The fruit itself is usually a nauseous green — for bananas are never shipped ripe and those that ripen on the tree for local consumption are not noticeably numerous, and indeed are inferior in flavor. However, I wish to say here and now, before I forget it, that one who has never eaten bananas that have at least ripened on their native heath has never really eaten the food that the gods must live upon.

A tattered darkey hung precariously to the outer

edge of the rear observation platform as the train clattered up the line, his mouth full of bits of paper. Now and again he cast one of these into the dust behind us. It was as if he expected to leave a clue for the uses of a game of hare-and-hounds. Examination revealed, however, that these bits of paper were notices to the local planters that the Metapan would take all the bananas they would bring to the wharf on the following Friday. This haphazard general notice appeared to be the regular thing, for repeatedly figures emerged from the undergrowth and gathered the papers in.

Periodically the train rattled through a wayside town. These towns were all alike. There was no street, save that afforded by the railroad. The houses — little more than shacks — stood in a single file on either side. Negroes, presumably from Jamaica, inhabited them. All the houses stood on stilts, as in Panama. Occasionally would flash by a tiny "cantina," where liquid refreshment was dispensed, usually bearing a pious name like "Madre de Dios" (Mother of God) after the Spanish fashion — or else "The Purified Martyrs," or "Nombre de Dios," or something equally impressive. The nomenclature of the Latin saloon is as pietistic as you can imagine.

The observation car on the single daily train —

there is but one — holds itself out to a deluded world as a “buffet” car. I had visions of broiled chicken, or deviled ham sandwiches, and such viands — but later had occasion to be glad that we had brought some food along from the ship. The “buffet” in that car consists entirely of an ice-tank, in which is a limited supply of White Rock, ginger ale, and a few bottles of beer. Along about eleven o’clock the conductor comes by and whispers that the next junction (named by the Mogul, “Banana Split”) will afford a chance to alight and secure a real luncheon — the train halting there for ten gormandizing minutes. He can provide you with the necessary liquid to wash down the lunch — but no more. Whereupon you search your pockets and make a brave attempt to master the coinage of the country, to the end that the inner man may be fed. The coinage of Costa Rica is not an altogether simple matter, chiefly because of the depreciated character of it. As in Panama, the average vendor quotes you a price in “gold” — meaning thereby lawful money of the United States, which every one is mighty glad to get. If you happen to have *colones* — the native dollar is called a *colon*, in a zealous but rather futile effort to honor the great discoverer — you will find that the *colon* is n’t worth much over forty-two cents, even in the

flattering estimation of its own creators and sponsors. It is the same all through Central America, I suppose. At present, for example, the Mexicans would regard the offer of \$50,000 for the capture of such an outlaw as Villa as meaning something like \$2,000,000 in the Carranzista currency. If you take a five-dollar American bill to a grocer in Colombia and buy a ham with it, you will need to cart away the change in a dray.

Somehow or other people managed to secure fruit of the women who besieged the train at the restaurant station. I suspect they paid for their bananas about double what they would have paid in New York. The difficulty was that of finding any coin small enough to serve. However, if the bananas were costly they were worth it. I never saw such bananas — just ripe, and fairly bursting their yellow skins; only the Mogul had ordered some beer for me, and then unkindly remembered that if you eat a banana after drinking beer you will surely have a *calentura*, and most likely will die. I suspect a *calentura* is a euphemism for a pain in the midriff. Certainly it sounds better — and sounds rather fatal, too. The others ate all the bananas, but I was consoled by the promise of Señor P. — a local magnate on his way home — that when we got to Turrialba he would treat the entire train to

such pineapples as had never been tasted by one of us before. He was right, too.

The railroad turned inland when it met the rapid torrent of the Rio Rivenzon. At the moment the latter was merely a perfectly respectable river, but that was because of the fact that it was the (comparatively) dry season. A little later the rains would begin and the stream must then increase. Its name is said to imply a sort of explosively impetuous quality, and it has also a nickname no less expressive — the “Toro Amarillo” or “Yellow Bull.” At wet seasons it is prone to take great bites out of the banks in entire disregard of the railroad company’s easement-of-way, so that passengers are compelled to walk gingerly around the newest cave-in. Even in the dry period we found several places where the track lay crazily across improvised revetments, and at such points “Mike” prudently slowed his train to a mere walk. Rivulets came streaming down the sides of the ravines and flowed amiably along between the rails. I do not wonder that they have washouts on this road; rather do I wonder that they ever have anything else.

Fortunately it was not ever thus. When we had passed the worst of the places we began to climb — a steady, chugging sort of climb, always following the sinuosities of the valley, but making at every

bend a gain upward. A straight bit of track was very rare, indeed. The line curved continually as it ascended, and terrifying depths began to yawn below. The train clung to a mere shelf over the abyss — an abyss filled so full of amazing trees that one wondered how the land nourished them all. Some of these trees were said to be mahogany — a fact that surprised me because somehow I had never expected to see mahogany in any form but that of chairs and tables and highboys. Also there was eucalyptus — more familiar in the form of oil.

At last the train attained an altitude well above the timber-line, and for the steaming heat of the tropics, we now exchanged to the delights of a balmy upland springtime. True, one could still look down into tremendous vales where, far beneath, there rioted a tropic vegetation; but the immediate environment was that of the temperate zone and every one felt himself revived. Turrialba found us at twenty-five hundred feet above the sea, and its ripe pineapples beggared the vocabulary of eulogy, just as Señor P. had promised. I pity you — for unless you have been in Turrialba you do not know pineapples at all! The thing you call a pineapple might as well be exactly that — a dry, wooden thing, sprayed with flavoring extract. At Turrialba, which is a hamlet on the side of an extinct volcano

of the same name, they have the genuine article, creamy in texture, dripping with juices, and possibly the original of the nectar-and-ambrosia with which Father Zeus and his celestial company once refreshed themselves. They call it a *piña* (peenyah) — which sounds more like the taste. I rejoice in retrospect partly because of the lively memory of the flavor, and partly because there is no silly local superstition against consuming *piña* after having partaken of malt.

So far as concerns mere altitude, Turrialba is low down. You naturally seem to be pretty well up in the world at twenty-five hundred feet — but the real climb is yet to come. You've got to be carried up over the shoulder of Irazú — a volcano which, alas, is not extinct at all — until you reach Cartago at an elevation of about fifty-eight hundred feet. As you go upward, the views become increasingly magnificent, as a matter of course. The valleys below your feet broaden into colossal bowls rimmed by ragged peaks. You lose the river. You begin to catch glimpses toward the west that betoken the near approach of the continental divide and the *facilis descensus* of the Pacific slope.

Cartago, on the summit of the ridge, is stupid to a degree, because it is growing up anew from a ruin, like weeds on a burned grassplot. Not so



IN RURAL COSTA RICA

many years ago Irazú wakened from his dream and erupted. The particular Titan pinned beneath the mountain must have stirred and turned over, with disastrous results to Cartago. That classically named city was "delenda-ed" with a comprehensiveness that even the exacting Cato would have approved. Hundreds of people were killed, and few of the old buildings survived. The town is growing up again, but is too much given to corrugated iron — locally regarded, it would seem, as God's last, best gift to man. Further, the town is inhabited exclusively by boys. I know this because I saw them. They were all at the station. They subsist by selling cakes of a fearful and wonderful kind to incautious tourists who are deaf to all warnings against *calentura*. Their lung-power is unsurpassed. Nature intended them for auctioneers.

From this point onward the journey is easy. San José lies only a dozen more miles to the west and perhaps one thousand feet lower down, in a sort of vast interior basin between huge mountain ranges. The farms begin to reveal coffee-trees rather than bananas, although there are still bananas. Señor P. showed us his own plantation and was electrified to sudden frenzy by seeing his son and daughter — choice selections out of a flourishing family of eleven — wildly chasing the train on

foot. They had come out to meet father — and the train for some reason had failed to stop at their pair of bars for the first time in recorded history. Nothing could be done, of course, for the train was running downhill by now and was intent on getting home to its supper; so there was naught for the disconsolate señor to do but curse the railroad company with truly Spanish-American fervor until the engine drew panting into the station of San José.

And what a landing it was! The station was full of people, chiefly delegations to meet the Mogul and assure him that abundant rooms had been reserved for his use and behoof in divers hotels. Seven cities claimed Old Homer dead — but, thanks to the official interest which the Mogul had awakened in Limon, seven hotels now fought for his body, living. It was what is called, I believe, in our French quarters an *embarras de richesses*.

Never have I been more deeply impressed by the master mind. The Mogul solved all difficulties by simply going to a hostelry whence no runner appeared to claim him — meantime commending the warring porters to the inundation of tourists all about us who had made no reservations and were fair game. Nor did we regret it. The hotels of San José are without exception bad. Human testimony is convincing to that effect. But to the

little outlying *casa de huéspedes* — it would be a “boarding-house” in our unpoetic English speech — which the Mogul selected as our abode, I here and now take off my hat. It was a haven of rest in a weary land, and the Señorita Montealegre has a cook who is beyond praise.

CHAPTER VIII

SAN JOSÉ

SAN JOSÉ is a one-story town. By this I mean no disrespect to the capital and chief city of the Costa Ricans. There is all the difference in the world between a one-story town and a one-horse town. I say that San José is a one-story town because that is literally — or almost literally — true.

The reason is the prevalence of earthquakes. These are of very frequent occurrence. In fact I suspect that a veracious seismograph would testify that the surface of the country is almost never quite still. There must be almost perpetual tremors, whereof only the greater ones are seriously felt.

Three young men, clerks in local banks and consulates, whom I found sitting on Señorita Montealegre's "piazza" when I emerged from a hasty ablution after a day on the train, began forthwith to enlighten me as to the latest big shock, which had occurred on the previous Sunday. It had, they said, lasted a "full minute" — with subsequent tremors enduring for nearly an hour. The sensation was that of being on the deck of a ship at sea. Men walking the streets suddenly staggered as if drunk,



A CENTRAL AMERICAN STREET GROUP

and extended their arms involuntarily, as rope-dancers do. One of them said that after this funambulatory experience he was downright seasick and had n't felt well since. It made me rather timorous, for I was never in an earthquake but once, and I did n't like it, even then. Visitors in Costa Rica are always terrified at the thought of quakes. As for the natives, they have by no means gotten used to *tremblements de terre* and most of them, as I found, were quite willing to confess that they, too, were always afraid. Why not?

I may as well own up now that we experienced no earthquake at all while in the city. I lived in hourly expectation, but none came. It seemed entirely natural that there should be such things, however, since from our veranda one could see the summits of three volcanoes, only technically extinct. Irazú, the biggest, had proved its content of fire within a few years by destroying Cartago, the next considerable town. The middle mountain seemed to be very quiet. The third — it had a name something like "Boaz," so that I named the middle one "Ruth" — was smoking behind a veil of cloud. All three sloped in a tremendous incline from the depths of a tiny intervening valley. Over toward the south, where lay the main part of the city, there was a broad plain — a lofty plateau

something like forty-five hundred feet above the sea — extending to the feet of some other, but not volcanic, mountains of conspicuous ruggedness. This plain, I found, was the very heart of Costa Rica, sheltering the one considerable city and the chief province. In all, however, there are five states in the republic, and two petty divisions known as *comarcas*. I discover, now that it is too late to do me any good, that when I was in Limon I was in a *comarca*. It adds to my retrospective bliss.

It must be rather difficult business to make a tour of the several Costa Rican states. The chief reason is that there are no roads at all. The railroad — very precarious in its existence owing to the rains and the quakes — is the one means of communication between the capital and either ocean. Most of the states are entirely apart from it and must be reached either by riding on horseback over rough trails or else, as the president later informed me, by going “up the rivers in a gasoline.”

The total population is about 400,000 I believe, whereof about 40,000 live in San José. Until quite recently revolutions were never indulged in, and upon this fact Costa Rica has prided herself. The altogether charming Señorita A., with whom I talked and who had been educated in “the States,” laid due stress on this fact. “That’s where we have

something on Nicaragua," she glibly said. "They are always fighting. We never do!"

I commented on the ease with which she had tossed off the idiomatic expression "having something on," and asked if her vocabulary included any other Americanisms. "Ah, yes," she answered: "When I was in New Jersey they taught me to say, 'Hang a piece of crape on his nose; his brains are dead!'" (My country! O my country!)

Most of the better-class Costa Ricans — and they are a thrifty people who understand money-making and gentle living — are educated in Europe or America. The result is that English is widely spoken, and one whose Spanish is rusty has but little difficulty in "getting around." Mine is as rusty as it can be and still remain Spanish. Attempts to use it on shopmen, cabbies, and the local police were invariably disastrous. And, by the way, since I have mentioned the police, let me say that one of the proofs offered to demonstrate the law-abiding quality of the native is that the night force now carries "only a single-shot rifle instead of a repeating Winchester"! I submit that for what it is worth. No doubt the rifles are but seldom used — but if a couple of natives, full of supper and dis-tempering draughts, happen to fall upon each other with machetes, a constabulary weapon capable of

being operated with effect from a distance must be desirable.

One may speak with but little assurance on a three days' acquaintance, but at all events in the three days I saw no such disorder and no public drunkenness. The latter, of course, does exist, as it always must in a land where native wines are unknown and where recourse is had by the joyous celebrant to potent distillations. The drawback about Latin-America is its lack of any comparatively harmless beverage and the common decision to substitute raw brandy for lesser alcoholics. *Aguardiente* must be as deadly as it sounds.

I was awakened on the first morning in town by a sound of wheels in the street below, and looked out. It was an impressive sight. The garbage man was abroad on his scavenging rounds. Ahead of his open wagon walked in a sober platoon four enormous vultures, all in sable and maintaining the chastened demeanor of undertakers at an open grave. Behind the wagon walked half a dozen other vultures, similarly sedate. And around the rim of the cart, perched in a solemn row, sat twenty-one other birds of the same species and same somber hue. I would fain have immortalized the scene, but the camera, alas, was n't loaded. I began to understand why the streets of San José, which leave much to be

desired in other respects, are at least so notably clean. The buzzards attend to that!

Your chief impression of the streets, after their cleanliness, is that they are rough. The rains, so heavy and frequent in their season, naturally wash much of the surfacing away and macadam is only beginning to be laid with scientific regard to tar and oil binders. If you take a carriage, at six *colones* an hour, you will appreciate the ruggedness of the highways even more surely than if you walk; and if you talk ambitiously about motoring outside the town you will be told that there's no road to motor on. I caught one glimpse of the rugged highway that leads over to Cartago and decided then and there against venturing it in an automobile. On horseback one might make the trip, or in one of those curious local ox-carts with perfectly solid wheels made of disks cut from a giant tree. But of real carriage road there is none in Costa Rica and there will be none for years.

People are beginning to wake up to the necessity for them, it is true, and one hears grumbling over the folly of having a \$2,000,000 opera-house (which they have) as contrasted with feasible state highways (which they have not). It seems absurd, truly, to have a national theater so magnificent and costly that it can almost never be opened for use —

and then only with a government subsidy to import actors and singers. Yet San José, while apologizing for her extravagance in this regard, is still genuinely proud of the white-elephant theater and lets you walk in and look at it. It is one of the few two-story buildings in town, and it is certainly magnificent. The marbles are the choicest. The mural decoration is superb. The earthquakes have thus far spared it. In past years it was used for the grand presidential ball — but a young and thrifty administration is now in power which refuses to give any such party, so that even this delight is suspended for the nonce. Occasionally the theater is used for competitions among local poets, who read their effusions in public and are rewarded with sprigs of bay, or wild olive, in truly Olympic fashion.

Of course the Mogul had letters to local potentates and their effect was far-reaching. They led first of all to a gayly caparisoned barouche that drove up the next day to take us on a tour of the town. On the box were two young natives in livery, with white duck trousers and “tall hats answering to the name of Fido,” in the playful language of Irvin Cobb. As we clattered off through the undulating streets, past the rest of the ship’s people we felt very haughty, indeed. Later on, an audience was arranged for us with the youthful president (since incontinently de-



COSTA RICAN BULLOCK CARTS

posed) hight Gonzales. (Maybe you did n't know his name? I did n't before; nor yet did the Mogul. But we covered our ignorance by the simple expedient of finding out from the señorita at our *pension* before we were ushered into the presence-chamber!)

The president abides in a pleasant official mansion over on the easterly side of the city. There are gardens blazing with tropical flowers outside and walks shaded by rows of royal palms. We were ushered, as I said, into the presence-chamber and found it a tremendous room, decorated in a rich red brocade, with a regiment or two of red chairs rearing up on slender gilt legs all over the place. You know the kind. No real palace could exist without them. I began to wish I had worn my dress-suit. The chief local pundit, X., who went with us attired in the uniform of a captain of industry, felt quite at home. The Mogul and I sat gingerly down on the edge of two chairs apiece, it being deemed safer to distribute weight on things so beautifully frail.

I expected a blare of trumpets and a bit of singing as the prelude to the official entrance. It would have harmonized with the chairs. But instead a clerk led President Gonzales down from his offices to meet us — and a very attractive young gentleman he turned out to be. He seemed to have attained that age that Boston ladies refer to coyly as

"between thirty-five." He had a winning smile, good teeth, becoming clothes, and was in all respects debonair. He inquired if we spoke Spanish; and the Mogul answered, in his most fluent Castilian, "No." Whereupon the president immersed us in another effulgent smile and graciously said that he would try to speak English — which he did indifferent well. It was, at all events, a much better medium of exchange than our Spanish would have been. One can't talk to a full-fledged president about "hot water" and "How much does that cost?" and "Sir, we wish a room with two beds"; and my Spanish is only about as good as that.

Prodded now and then by the interpretative X., we made shift to converse for upward of half an hour. As I recall it we talked chiefly of the weather, and how nice it was to be in San José, and how desolated we should be when we had to go. None of us knew quite how to close the interview. I waited for the president to rise, extend his hand to be kissed, and intimate that we might back out of the room. Since he gave no sign, I looked helplessly at the Mogul and found him looking helplessly at me. X. looked as helpless as both of us together. Then, as if touched by a spring, we all arose at once, mumbling in unison some further commonplaces as to how nice it was to be in San José and how we should hate to go,

shook hands all round, and emerged into the free sunshine. It was unanimously voted that the president was a mighty nice chap, and that an enjoyable time had been had by all. X. then ordered the liveried coachmen to proceed at a dignified pace to the lunatic asylum.

You will not escape the lunatic asylum in any of these Latin countries. In Havana they insisted upon showing it, and X. was not going to have us miss the one in San José. Now that I have seen it, I do not blame him. It was a tropical paradise that would outshine the finest public garden you ever saw. The lunatics were thoughtfully removed to a remote part of the establishment, and we were only aware of a distant pandemonium of drums mingling with faintly audible but blood-curdling shrieks. Emptied of its inmates, and peopled only by gentle nuns and a no less gentle doctor, it was charming to a degree. One thing they certainly do well in Latin-America. They look well after the *pobrecito loco* — the “poor little crazy-one.”

I happened to have a loaded camera the day I saw the milkman come along. At first sight I thought him a cavalry officer. He was on horseback and he swung around the corner on the canter, with several capacious cans clattering at his saddle-bow. The mystery is how the milk escapes being churned to

butter by the time it reaches the ultimate consumer. The reason for going on horseback is, I suppose, that the milk route occasionally leads over a way impracticable for wheels. Decidedly the crying need of Costa Rica, including San José, is good roads.

In one other particular, besides having a president living there, San José is like Washington. It is divided into quarters by two great central thoroughfares. Each quarter is laid off in squares by highways that are called "streets" when they run north and south, and "avenues" when they run east and west. Each series is numbered — not named. Our house, for example, was at the corner of First Street and Eleventh Avenue, N.W. This is highly scientific but I confess I don't like it much. I prize the irregular and unscientifically planned town, where the streets run crazily and have real names of their own. There is a dreary certainty about such things in San José. Further, I gathered from directions given me by the local police that each block is one hundred feet in length. At all events, when I asked for the house of Señor X., they told me to go east *dos cientos* — two hundreds — and then south one hundred.

The monotony of ambulation about the town is broken by the amazing quality of the sidewalks. These are never very wide — usually, indeed, so narrow that two may not walk abreast; and to make

matters worse, they are often as much as two feet above the street level, although this is subject to constant variation. One is always going up and down steps, and in the dark one must watch out. If you meet a lady you jump down into the street, taking care not to get into the gutter, which is also the sewer.

San José has two public squares, or parks, where twice a week — now in one and now in the other — the municipal band plays. This is as well understood an institution as the days of the week and of course everybody goes. The one nearest our house has four well-marked divisions on each corner, and the pavilion for the band is in the center. Whether there is any class distinction in the other three I do not know, but one of the quarters is by common consent frequented by the “better class.” There is no rule about it — that is to say, no one is excluded. You simply know that if you walk through that particular square on a concert evening you will find all the “real people” there, and in the other corners not one of them.

A bevy of San Josefiñas — that is the pretty way they have of denominating the girls of the city — is an interesting sight. It seems to be locally regarded as the acme of full dress for a festal occasion for the girls to take down their hair and let it flow over

the shoulders. The "real people," whose daughters have been educated abroad, do not do this; in fact they turn up their noses and sniff. The local coiffure is regarded as indicating an ignorance of the *beau monde*. But this bothers the native San Josefiña not at all, and she parades gayly with her friends and with her affianced, if she has one, with flowing locks.

We walked under the shadows of trees while the band performed the traditional five selections. It was a quiet, well-ordered throng. The girls walked to and fro and shook their ringlets provocatively at the young men. In a dark corner, on a bench, I detected Señor X. and Señorita Y., gazing into each other's eyes and shyly conversing. It pleased me; for I knew by local gossips that papa did not approve, and it gave color to the sage remark of the adorable Señorita A. — she of the sophisticated American idiom — that she "rather guessed they'd pull it off in spite of the old man." They did, too, later on — and I have no doubt will live happily ever after.

No earth tremors were experienced during the brief time that we remained in San José, but rumor said that in the interval the railroad down toward Turrialba had washed away again. This being a mere commonplace the line was in working order next day — and it was both possible and necessary to

revert to Limon and the ship. Those in charge of her had not been idle. She was loaded to capacity with bananas and it seemed impossible to afford accommodation to anything more. Nevertheless the captain, in the goodness of his soul, yielded to the importunities of an itinerant circus which was stranded at the port and admitted for passage back to the Isthmus a choice collection of weary animals, horses, and performers of various descriptions. The latter berthed themselves as best they could for a night on the tables and sofas of the saloon. The animals, including one giraffe and what the late A. Ward would have described as "2 moral bares," lent color and other things to the open spaces adjacent to the fo'c'sle. I doubt that any more picturesque shipload has ever committed itself to the mercies of the deep since the days of Father Noah. Disquieting visions of what might happen if we ran into a storm were dispelled by the captain's bluff assurance that there "never was any wind in here" — and in truth we sailed to Cristobal over a glassy sea, disgorging our acrobats and menagerie without untoward incident in the morning to delight the inhabitants of two coasts. It required little more than an hour. And by night Cristobal was for us no more than a faint glare against a tropic sky as the prow turned again toward the Polar star.

PART TWO
PORTO RICO

CHAPTER IX

PREPARING FOR PORTO RICO

YOU might think it an easy and simple thing to make a pilgrimage, even in war-time, from New York to a dependency of the United States so near at hand as Porto Rico — but it was not; and unless things have improved since the war it is n't even now as simple as it was before.

Theoretically, as you are at no time out of our glorious jurisdiction, you need no passport. If you did, it would be more of a ceremony than it is. Any one who has asked for a passport recently must know that the only thing harder to obtain is passage for a camel "through the knee of an idol," as the late Mr. Nye somewhere remarks. Of course there's a reason. The Germans began to abuse our easy-going passport system at the outset of the war; and before our Government was fully awake they had flooded the world with spurious documents which made an infinitude of trouble. Then the screws went on. Passports were issued only for limited terms and after the most painstaking scrutiny of the applicant; moreover, confining the scope of the permit to a very limited area of the earth's crust. One is glad this was

done — but personally it involves inconveniences.

If you seek a passport now the resultant inquisition is likely to make you feel that you're a potential impostor whether you are or not. The very fact that you desire a passport seems to be *prima-facie* evidence against you. Who are you, anyway? Are you who you say you are? Prove it to us! Show us your picture! Tell us where you were born — and where your parents were born. Get a *bona-fide* wage-earner to vouch for you. Why must you travel? Why not stay at home? Are you really sure you are not a spy? Bow-wow-wow! However, if this ordeal suffices to keep down the number of the idly curious who would otherwise go to Europe before Europe is ready for company, it is n't altogether amiss. But it is suspected that it discourages too few who really ought to be discouraged. I know it frightened me.

I selected Porto Rico as a place which the Government would probably not care too much about. It seemed rather like going to Chicago. But somewhere there is a magic in the fact that you go thither on a boat. The Government is not incurious about you, after all.

At any rate, the steamer company gave me a long printed sheet of instructions as to what must be done before any one could be allowed to sail. Thanks to the armistice, the requirements that you get the

gracious permission of your local draft board to leave the confines of the State had been done away — but there was enough left. You had to secure permission from the immigration authorities — and that was only one degree less difficult than to get a sure-enough passport from Washington. It meant that you'd got to go to the deputy's office in Nassau Street, produce a sheaf of photographs, make out a questionnaire as long as the moral law giving facts about your ancestors unto the third and fourth generation, bring satisfactory evidence of citizenship, produce a well-known citizen of the United States who had known you for three or four years to swear to your identity — and then, if all went well, the office would give you a permit card.

Then, at least fifty-seven and a half hours before sailing, you must take that card to the custom house of the port, undergo a thorough examination, get it what the Government calls "visaed," and possibly you might be allowed to sail.

I came near giving it up. All this looked like a mountain; and besides, the winter was so open that it seemed silly to go south. But I'd talked it over with the Mogul, and he was bound we should go. Besides, the M.'s wanted to go — after first talking about residual floating mines and the suicidal folly of the whole business. So I took my courage in

both hands and went through the mill. This is the story thereof. If you have had experience with such things you will know it was n't nearly so terrible as it sounded.

Getting the photographs was the worst part. The regulations are terribly specific about those. They tell you that the picture must have light background — and being a blond I always take a poor picture against anything but a really dark black. Then they insist that the face of the subject must be at least one inch and a half long in the finished picture; that the negative must n't be retouched; that the paper must be of a certain specified thinness; that you will need three pictures; and that the complete picture must n't on any account be any bigger than just so and so. It seemed that no photographer could guarantee all this. However, you have to take a chance. So I found a little wayside booth in Sixth Avenue, presided over by a genial Yiddish gentleman who advertised by displaying a hideous blue light in his window and a sign saying that he knew all about passport pictures. There are a million of these in the United States, more or less.

I went in. The proprietor sat me down in a sort of electric chair and turned on his lights. The others stood around and watched, but they said they could hardly bear it. Under that ghastly blue glare you

don't exactly look as if you were dead — you look "considerably more than that," like Huckleberry Finn's "sick Arab."

The artist squinted at me through his camera, issued a series of conflicting orders as to which way I was to look, told me not to assume quite so austere an expression — and finally took the picture. He also took Katrina's. I wish you could see them — or rather I am glad you can't! Katrina looks like a cigarette girl from Carmen — a person with no principle or reputation whatever. As for me, the photographer shuddered as if in pain when he produced the completed photographs, and ducked prudently as he handed them across the counter. I looked, in the picture, like the Wrath of Heaven.

Naturally I hated to show those things to the immigration officer. Nothing was more clear than that the inspector would say I was an anarchist with a prison record. I should n't have blamed him.

But the inspector proved to be a nice man. He lives in a skyscraper downtown, near the haunts of the Money Power. You ascend in a crowded elevator. It is now about ten in the forenoon, say — the hour at which New York really begins to think about work. You are disgorged on the dozenth floor into a corridor which appears to be filled with waiting Bolsheviks. They have been marshaled in what the

British call a "queue" — a discouragingly long and disgustingly smelly queue — and of course you think you are in for six hours of standing in line.

But the elevator boy is wise for one so young. He says, "Say, fella, what do you want? Just an application, ain't it? Well, just you go right in!" So you push your way up to the head of the line, pursued by a roar of protest in a dozen different languages from the assembled Bolsheviki. It is rough work — but needs must when the devil drives! I can't see that any one has any right to do it, strictly, because all any of those fellows want is "an application." I am grateful, however, to that mendacious elevator boy, because what otherwise might have taken me six hours really took only about thirty minutes.

I said the inspector was a nice man. He was all of that. He rushed me off to a corner, spread some blanks before me, gave me a bad pen, and told me to write my history. I knew how he felt. I've served on legal advisory boards during the draft, and I know that when you get a subject who seems reasonably intelligent, so that he can fill out his own cards, it is a mercy from heaven as compared with wrestling with a man who can't read, write, or even speak English. But I was still worried about that reputable New York citizen who would have to swear

that he had known me three years — because the Mogul was sick at home and I could n't think of any other. The inspector waved that aside. He said, "I suppose the Missus will swear to you — or at you — won't she?" She did. I produced the photographs. He pasted them on — merely favoring me with a horrid laugh as he looked at mine and saying "Gad!" under his breath.

Katrina swore — but in a different tone of voice — as to my identity. She also helped me to make a description of my personal appearance, but this involved some quibbling. I wanted to describe my forehead as "broad and noble," nose as "straight," eyes as "blue and honest," and certain other flattering little touches which seemed to me only my due after the libel of that photograph. But Katrina kept my feet sternly on the ground, curtailed all the descriptive matter, and finally got me passed on to an inner chamber where a skeptical young clerk and two young women stenographers were sifting the sheep from the goats. It was quieter in here and not quite so odoriferous. I wrote my name across the pictures — comprehending now what the idea was when they demanded the light background. The young man made me swear again — and then disfigured my picture still more by whacking a rubber stamp which said "Granted" across it.

Never mind. It improved the picture, if anything!

Then we went out. To be sure it was n't all over, even yet. I still had to go down to the barge office and get the horrible thing "visaed" — and was passed from one custom-house officer to another, amidst great crowds of steerage applicants, all of us seeking permission to leave the U.S.A. I told a dozen bored clerks how old I was and where I was born. I supplied data as to my father and my mother. I confessed that I was merely seeking pleasure. I was "visaed," as the Government calls it, and stamped and certified, and war-taxed to no end.

Even after being "visaed," you find that there is an abundant formality about leaving shore. At the dock they stop your cab at the very gates and tell you to get out. You enter a rude shed, heated by a red-hot stove that was built in 1834. Customs officers demand your papers — and look you over to see if you resemble the photographs. If you do not — which is usually and very fortunately the case — you are still passed along. The next man wants to see your money. He demands all of it — to see if you are supplied with any gold, silver, or certificates calling for either. Somehow it appears to be undesirable to let the Porto Ricans have either of those useful metals. If you have such money, it is taken

away and you are given the kind of bills the Government does permit you to carry — Federal Reserve notes, or ordinary bank notes. Possibly this rigor has been mitigated since, however.

Then you go down to the dock waving your permit card, so all the world may see. And when at last you climb the gangplank to the ship, you are solemnly warned that the step is irrevocable. Once you go on board, you are there to stay! *Lasciate ogni speranza!* It is as momentous a step as getting married. But as you expect no summons to return and as your one object is to get away this prospect has no terrors. You go aboard — and are a prisoner. No power short of Mr. Wilson can get you back on land now. It is *verboten*.

But you forget all about these routine bothers when at last you are at sea. The air is moist and heavy — conducive to rest. It is n't like wine in the nostrils; it is more like treacle — or, perhaps better, laudanum! Your one wish is to stretch yourself out and sleep, save when you get into the wind. The latter revives you — and while its influence prevails you stand out in the very bow of the ship watching the flying fish, exclaiming at the incredible blue of the water, and in general chortling over your unexpected luck in finding summer so early.

The bromidioms of the day are:

"I don't believe the water's any bluer than that in the Mediterranean!"

"Can you believe this is the last day of February?"

The Brazos on which we sailed had some features that appealed to me despite her evident years. Her method of calling the devout to meals is a very excellent one. No boisterous bugle shatters the tropic calm, as on most ships. Instead the patient deck steward, whose face and figure recall the Artful Dodger, ambles nimbly over the vessel beating a melodious zylophone. He plays no real tune, though now and then one catches certain phrases that suggest the *leit motif* of "I can't get 'em up!" or of "Where did you get that hat?" The Mogul who is again with us, is entranced by this, which he calls "making a joyful noise on an instrument of ten slats."

The stewards are mostly South Americans or Porto Ricans — which is to say not negroes, but *café au lait* mixtures of Spanish and Indian. They are a friendly lot, rather childlike, fairly efficient, for Southerners, and chiefly to be criticized for their indifference to the bell calls. The process of summoning spirits from the vasty deep is akin to that of getting hot water for your morning shave. You can call, easily enough — but will it come when you do

summon it? Answer is, No! The deck steward is a Cockney — a thin-faced Cockney, who leaves much to be desired in the way of performance, but is thoroughly satisfactory on his promissory side. There are two stewardesses who rival ox-eyed Juno and Hebe for personal charm.

That crabbed but by no means dull philosopher, the late Dr. Samuel Johnson, once remarked that a man who deliberately confined himself in a ship at sea was a fool. "He would much better be in jail," thought the Doctor. "For a man in prison has at least as much liberty — has better lodging, better food, and usually better company." I conclude that this dictum is rather amusing than true. I am forever sentencing myself to voluntary confinement aboard ships — and in spite of the fact that there is a tinge of verity about Ursa Major's caustic remark, we may disregard it as an exaggeration. It is at least true only in part. I never saw an entirely ideal ship's company yet — but generally you find one or two kindred souls. There is bound to be at least one venerable sage who voyaged on the ocean when steam vessels were young and when side-wheelers were plying between New York and Liverpool, although this ancient type is disappearing. There is bound to be a set unduly devoted to games of chance in the smoke-room. There will be some with the loud

laugh that speaks the vacant mind, and there is almost sure to be one example of "that despicable thing called 'the life of the ship.'" But out of the average passenger list you will find many who can tell you much, and a few who furnish the materials for enduring and helpful friendship.

· In my younger days I had a seafaring uncle who sagely advised me not to have anything to do with any place where you were absolutely dependent on a "bo't" for ingress and egress. He said, and quite truly, that this involved a degree of uncertainty and frequently labor and sorrow. "Bo'ts" do not run with the meager regularity and certitude of express trains — and, as we all know, that latter regularity leaves something to be desired, even under the benign administration of such as the excellent Mr. McAdoo! Boats are subject to manifold mischances unknown to the land; and sometimes when you want to take one it either is n't there, or does n't come, or has n't any staterooms left.

When you go to Porto Rico in the present congested conditions of ocean travel, you will do wisely to make absolutely sure of being provided with return accommodation before you start. Otherwise there may not be enough berths to go 'round and you may have to wait over a few ships — of which vessels there was only one a week when we were

there. I heard many a tale of woe as I later stood in line in the steamer office at San Juan, the burden of which was that every berth had been booked up until the middle of June, "unless some one gives up one." The waiting list was already a lengthy affair. In that view of it, my uncle was right. A "bo't" is a mighty uncertain thing.

But if I had plenty of money — money enough and to spare — I cannot conceive of a better place wherein to be condemned to stay indefinitely than San Juan. I can vouch for it as delightful in climate and in almost every other way. But I would advise you to make double-sure of your return accommodations before you go, in case you are limited as to time.

Theoretically there are several lines of steamers running to Porto Rico. Practically there are n't so many. None of the lines can at present boast of any capacious ocean-greyhounds — although I suspect that any of the ships that carry passengers at all will be found tolerable enough. Certainly the regular line, hight "New York and Porto Rico," which operates a passenger ship once in each week and which makes the voyage in about five days, manages to do pretty well by you. The present ships are not very young, but they're competent. Not the least comfortable by any means is the very oldest of them all — an aged liner that a generation

ago plied between New York and England, now named "Coamo," but having silverware marked "State of California." The worst thing about the ships is that they sail from Brooklyn. Once you have said that, and once you have made up your mind that a vessel of this type is not going to be the *Mauretania*, or the *Leviathan*, you have prepared your soul for what, in ordinary conditions of wind and weather, is likely to be an admirable midwinter trip to a land of sunshine.

They that go down to the sea in ships and do business in the great waters traditionally know and appreciate the wondrous workings of the Lord — but in the past five years they have also learned to know and deprecate the evil workings of man. No sea has been safe. In addition to the natural hazards of wind and wave, fog and fire, there sprang into being the dread menaces of the submarine. That's all over now — but while it lasted the Porto Rico line lost one of the best of its ships. The *Carolina* was torpedoed at sea in 1916 by a wandering Hun; and while most of her people got off safely, a few were lost by the upsetting of a boat and the ship herself is at the bottom. It was a bad blow to the line, and it taught people that by no means all the U-boat danger lay in a trip to the other side. For month after month those Porto Rico ships toiled to and fro,

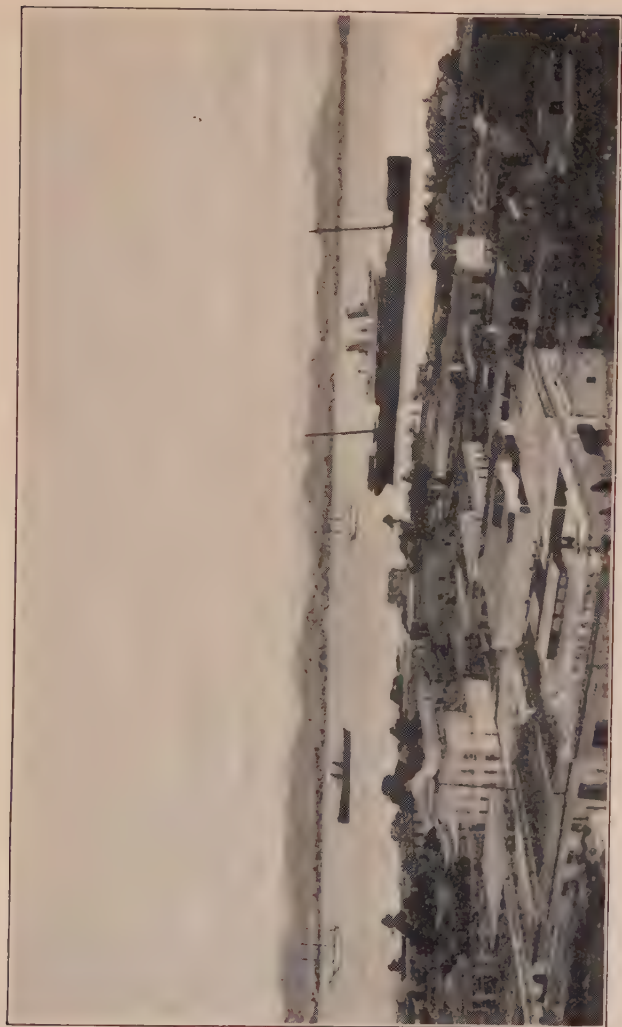
painted up with blue-and-white camouflage, darkened at night, guns ever ready, lookouts ever vigilant. And to-day, with the camouflage dimly painted out, with the lights turned on again, the guns removed and the ordinary life of shipboard resumed, they go religiously through the boat drill and still make you don your life-belt for practice. I appreciate what a serious business it must have been through all those months; and when one of my fellow-passengers, grotesquely garbed in his life-preserver and standing by his appointed boat, remarked to the purser that it "seemed rather a joke," the purser looked far away and said, "Well, you know, we have n't got back even yet to where we can see the joke of it! It was pretty real to us for a good many voyages, and the fun of it is hard to see!"

I asked the skipper if it was n't a relief to have the war over and all the strain of it — a foolish question, and the bromidic one. He said it was a relief — naturally. He had hated running without any lights. But still he said he "got kind of used to it — until they signed the armistice and then he went all to pieces." I can see that too. To have had that awful nightmare, which sat on your shoulder night and day for two years, suddenly removed — what a reaction must follow!

One day we saw a whale. It was close inboard,

and it was not only spouting regularly, but was so near the surface that now and again its long, black body rolled lazily into view on the swells. I suppose a year ago the gun crew would have turned loose on it at once, just because no one in those days took any chances. As it was, we all shrieked, "Whale!" And those who had never seen a whale shrieked, "Where? Where?" And we who had seen it shouted, "There! There! Over by that wave!" — in that fatuous way that we always do. A few voyages back the passengers would all probably have shouted "Submarine!" and dashed for their life-belts. Do you remember that thing in Audran's "Olivette" about the "Torpedo and the Whale"? They're much alike, you know, at a distance.

So the good ship sailed on and on, and all at once the eye of faith discerned what might be land — loftily lying — possibly a cloud, but looking remarkably like a dim and distant mountain. The usual skepticism greeted it, for landsmen never seem to recognize their native element at first sight when at sea. But it grew and grew, and in a little while it was easy to see that the dark blur was really tumbling mountains. At their foot a white line vaguely appeared — the city of San Juan. Hour by hour the island took shape, and then, minute by minute, the buildings on shore disentangled themselves. Morro



SAN JUAN HARBOR

Castle reared its lighthouse into view — and as dusk drew on the lantern began its regular flashings. Huge fires of withered sugar cane filled the distant shores with drifting smoke. And at the last, with the failing sunset glow, the Brazos stole into the land-locked harbor, halted, pivoted on her heel; and with the ease and certitude of a harbor steamer entered her slip, tied up, and signaled “Finished with engines” to a faithful but invisible crew. We had arrived; and San Juan, twinkling with lights and pallid in the afterglow, stood before us shimmering in the warmth of a tropical evening.

CHAPTER X

SAN JUAN

IF it was difficult to get aboard the steamer at New York in order to be allowed to depart for Porto Rico,¹ it was more difficult still to obtain

¹ Porto Rico, the smallest of the Greater Antilles, lies one thousand miles from Havana and fourteen hundred miles from New York. It contains a trifle over three thousand square miles. Columbus visited it November 19, 1493, substituting the name San Juan Bautista for the native name of Borinquén. Ponce de León, who visited the island in 1509, discovered gold there and was made governor. Revolts of the Indians against the Spaniards led to the virtual extermination of the former only a few years later. French, Dutch, and British at various times attacked the island, but the territory remained persistently Spanish, despite an occasional revolution of abortive character, down to the time of the war between Spain and the United States — most of this time under a military government, but with a belated autonomy granted as recently as 1897. May 12, 1898, Admiral Sampson bombarded the chief city, San Juan, but wrought comparatively little damage; and a land force working up from the south reduced the island to American possession which was subsequently confirmed by the peace protocols. Civil government under the American jurisdiction was inaugurated in 1900, Charles H. Allen becoming the first governor. The governor and other administrative officers are appointed by the President of the United States; the legislative body consists of a senate of nineteen members and a house of thirty-nine — the latter elected by the citizens of the island, who have been granted citizenship in the United States as well. The island also has a resident commissioner in the United States, chosen for a four-year term, who represents Porto Rico in the American Congress. Party divisions in the island include various brands of home-rulers and advocates of entire independence, as well as a party anxious for enlarged Americanization.

permission to go ashore there once we had arrived. I assumed that once the New York port authorities had satisfied themselves that I was a proper person to leave the United States — having given one look at that permit, adorned with the forbidding photographs of Katrina and me — the federal agents at San Juan would take their word for it. Not so.

It was a fairly hot night under the most favorable conditions; but next to an airless and covered dock, roofed with the corrugated iron which all earthquake countries so dearly love; and wedged as we all were in a queue of perspiring humanity down the narrow corridors of the ship, Tophet itself had no thermometer quite adequate to the demands of the occasion.

A fat official clothed in white samite, or some such garment, stood at one end of the gangplank. The purser did abide at his left side, and kept the bridge with him. Opposite stood a Porto Rican assistant, of meager English speech and of still more limited intelligence. Between these Cerberi we all had to proceed. Each in turn produced his little card with his personal history and his picture on it.

The native officer was most painstaking. He studied the photographs to no end, glancing from

time to time at the original to see if he could detect any resemblance. He dutifully read every word inscribed thereon. And having done all this, he naturally found that everything was all right; so that one by one, rather like molasses blobbing out of a narrow hole, our ship's company dribbled drop after drop into the aromatic vastness of the wharf below.

There was no medical inspection whatever, and there was no searching of our luggage. Either proceeding would have been far more defensible than this absurd scrutiny of our near-passports. Our mere presence on the boat was guaranty that we had been passed by New York and were reputable enough. But we might have contracted cholera or typhus on the trip, and our trunks might have been filled with whiskey, for all these San Juan authorities knew — and they let us in on trust, so far as concerned our health or our intent to fracture the strictly prohibitory laws of Porto Rico. Commend me to bureaucracy for solid ivoriness of dome, as the vivid vernacular hath it.

There are a few books extant on Porto Rico. The most capable one I have seen, written by one Verrall, states that after landing in San Juan and upon experiencing the usual mingled joys of debarkation, the hasty tourist is apt to conclude that it is one of

the most expensive places in the world. I concur — for, indeed, the author nowhere says a truer word. There is no avoiding the fact that on your first arrival you are fair game for the native of any country, and you are peculiarly at his mercy in San Juan. Who is going to tell you that the Palace Hotel, which lately you saw sticking up out of the houses as you came in, is only about three minutes' walk from the landing? You are hot, tired, anxious for your bed or your dinner. There is a lot of luggage to go up with you. There are numerous motors congregated outside, all honking their horns in the hot dusk and all officered by vociferous touts, who all want you to ride. Who is going to be such a kill-joy as to inform you that the local tariff for all motor cars is \$1.50 the ride, whether you go two blocks or twenty? So you clamber into the car — and inside of the tiny period traditionally required for shaking the caudal appendage of a youthful sheep you are landed at the hotel door. The unblushing driver demands three dollars! He will eventually take \$1.50 — and even then he will be a thief and a robber!

Somewhat later the polite and solid ebony negro to whom you turned over your trunks on the pier comes along with his load — and his minimum requirement is \$5.50. Mr. Verrall is entirely within the

limits of verity, so far as concerned one's erroneous first impressions.

I may add, however, that when the festive Porto Rican has done this unseemly thing to you on your first arrival, he has done his very worst and lets up on you. He has to, of course, because by this time you are more wise. You discover in a very brief tour of the town that it can be perambulated about from end to end in fifteen minutes of leisurely stroll; and the seductive tongue of the taxi-driver, or taxidermist, or whatever you call him, thereafter wags to you in vain. San Juan is n't really an expensive place at all. It only seems so for about thirty minutes on your first appearance. Next day it develops that it is a very clean, very hospitable, very diminutive, and altogether reasonable town. A thoroughly competent hotel offers you hospitality with bath, bed and board for some such trifle as, say, six or seven dollars a day, *todos comprendidos*. An itinerant vendor is willing to sell you a flexible straw hat for a very reasonable price. And a ready-made suit of Palm Beach cloth can be got for very little money, which will not pull apart until after at least one trip to the tubs. No sane tourist would complain of that.

San Juan, the capital city of Porto Rico, occupies an ideal situation on the northerly side of the island

and well toward the eastern end of that side. It is a city built on a tiny island of its own, which makes a natural breakwater enclosing a broad and capacious, if rather shallow, bay. Indeed, there is a striking similarity between the bay and that at Havana. Ships of considerable tonnage may enter through the narrow channel between the Morro fort and the little island hard by — which latter is fondly believed to harbor an asylum for lepers — and will find themselves in a perfectly protected basin, secure from every stormy wind that blows. When we arrived there was a big, gray liner moored in the midst of the harbor — obviously a former German. She turned out to be the old *Blücher*, once a favorite Hamburg-American ship, but now the property of Brazil and prettily renamed *Leopoldina*. She had got thus far on her way from Rio to New York, and she was in no hurry to proceed. The officers liked San Juan, and lingered. It was warm, and the food was good, and the dancing was excellent o' nights. Of other shipping there was little, save for bits of fishing boats with lateen sails and a little swarm of coastwise schooners. But from day to day small steam craft came and went, and the harbor was never a dull spot to watch. A tiny ferry plied back and forth between the city and a diminutive settlement, Cataño, on the opposite side of the harbor.

And far away, across this pleasant inland sea, there rolled the rugged summits of the mountains — none of them very high, but all abrupt — which form the backbone of the island and divide its northern from its southern side. In the foreground, closer to the bay, we saw an infinitude of little conical hills, strongly suggestive of chicken timbales.

San Juan itself occupies a gradual slope, ascending from the inland harbor till it reaches the edge of the outer cliffs, at which point the land drops abruptly into the Atlantic. I should say that the island on which the city is built must be about two miles long and about half a mile wide, extending east and west. On its outer side and well around toward the harbor the city is provided with a prodigious wall, erected by the early Spaniards and dutifully provided at every angle with projecting sentry-boxes of stone. If there was ever a similar wall on the harbor front, or on the end of the island whence the highway leads into the country, it has disappeared. But on the seaward side the fortifications are in splendid condition still; and the old fortresses of the Morro, San Cristobal, and so on, were, at the time of our visit, in the hands of troops — American soldiers, chiefly, whose one regret, in addition to their sorrow at being sent there instead of to France, was that they could n't get home.



ANCIENT SEA WALL, SAN JUAN

One soon discovers that these soldiers are friendly, and are most anxious to have speech with people from the States. The very first night, as we were prowling around the town in a vain search for *piña fria* — a cooling drink made of fresh pineapple and well known in Havana — two sergeants and a corporal volunteered to help and aired their Spanish with much gusto, but with deplorably little effect.

Which brings me to the point that unless you remember some of your Spanish, you may at times find it difficult to make your wants known in the island, despite the fact that the American occupation dates back more than a score of years. I cannot conceive how it happens, but in this prolonged period our country has done precious little to Americanize the island beyond making the place sanitary and compelling the shops to close on Sundays. We have organized a very admirable native police — splendid-looking men, whose chief function in life is to regulate traffic in the narrow streets. We have made the island a most healthy spot. We have built excellent roads into every corner of it. We have planted schoolhouses in every hollow and on every hillock. But we have made as little impression as you can imagine on the language, which remains Spanish to a very marked degree. Even the Palace Hotel spoke a most meager and limited

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brand of English; and I, who had possessed some smattering of Spanish years ago, found that while it came back very hard it was extremely useful. It was never very good Spanish, and in its best estate it was devoid of any verbs beyond the present tense. But such as it was it managed to smooth away many a rough place in the course of the week or two. A Porto Rican here and there will claim to speak English — but in most cases he does n't really, and often only pretends to understand because that is agreeable to you. Moral: Study Spanish before you take the trip. You'll have an easier time.

My first discovery was that a very eligible shopping street bore the name of Calle Allen — in short was named for my distinguished neighbor, first governor of Porto Rico back in 1900, who is still held in affectionate memory by inhabitants of middle age. It was but a step from the hotel to the governor's official palace; and although the present governor was away, it was possible to visit the official residence and its deep, luxuriant, and tropical garden just above the sea-wall. If I could secure the removal from its state apartments of certain paintings, — done by whom I suspect to be gifted local sign-painters and libeling shamefully certain of our presidents and generals, — I think I should

much enjoy living in the governor's palace at San Juan. Governor Allen's portrait is hung there too — but I should want to leave that. It was my passport and my introduction; for as we stood before it murmuring things about *amigo viejo*, behold the attendant brightened. Did we really know Governor Allen? Yes? Well, perhaps we might like to see the rest of the house! So we invaded intimate precincts not often shown, and thereafter commanded the friendly salutations of the officers on guard whenever we went by — which was daily.

Apart from the slight inconvenience imposed upon an American visitor by not being able to talk the lingo, it is a positive blessing that San Juan remains so foreign. It is delightfully so. The houses are painted in pale washes of greens, reds, pinks, yellows — and the deep doorways are forever giving you glimpse of fascinating *patios*, or courts, well within, where blossoms many an incense-bearing tree. Family groups congregate under the grateful shadow of the lofty walls — including a host of little brown babies, as naked as the moment they were born, gamboling unashamed. Their mothers object to having them photographed, though, in that condition — discovering a sudden modesty, or maybe a fear of the evil eye.

The Spanish predilection for sacred names blooms

forth in the nomenclature of the people and of the highways. Just above our hotel there was a long street ending in a sort of arched chapel — a votive offering to the Virgin, because once she appeared there and with upraised hand halted a runaway horse which was about to plunge with his driver into the sea beneath. That street is the Calle Santo Cristo — the street of the Holy Christ. On the other side of the hotel was the Street of the Holy Cross — and any amount of saintly streets will be found to criss-cross the town as you go about. But the ghostly have not all their own way. If a street is not named for some member of the Holy Family, or for some of the glorious company of the Apostles, it is almost sure to be named for some local magnate, like Salvadore Brau, or Baldorioty Somebody. And one street in especial bothered us by being named Tetuan Street — although what the connection might be between Porto Rico and this North-African name we never found out.

On Sunday the shops may not sell merchandise. Even the apothecary refuses to sell you a kodak film. But the opera runs two performances, full blast, on that day, and the hotel has a jazz dance at dinner-time, followed by a roof-garden ball that lasts until early Monday. Consistency is the usual jewel, even under tropic skies.

Liquor is not sold, and so far as I can discover prohibition in Porto Rico actually does prohibit. Porto Rico voted this measure a year or two in advance of the States and is admittedly a little stunned by the situation now that she is waking up to it. The next ship after ours brought down fifteen cases of ostensible canned salmon, which were discovered by the police in the nick of time to be Martell brandy. A kind of *pulque*, or *aguardiente*, or something of the sort, is said to be capable of being made at home out of boiled sugar-cane juice; but I saw no intoxicated person on the island during my own brief stay — which is a good thing, for they say the Porto Rican of the lowlier sort never carried his liquor well; and as he was usually armed with his machete in the country districts, his lapses from sobriety often took on a murderous cast. When sober he is a rather friendly soul, swarthy, indolent when in funds, and much given to oratory rather than to music.

There are several shades of color in San Juan among the resident population. There are a few Americans — not so many as you would think. There are proud Spanish families of ancient lineage. There are obvious hybrids, apparently a mixture of Spanish and Indian. And there are also negroes. On Sunday night, which happened in our case to be

in the Carnival season, the populace disported itself in the main plaza, marching about while the band played. No negroes were allowed to promenade — and whenever the police perceived a dusky person with kinky hair in the procession, he, or she, was gently but firmly removed and put on the sidelines. It appeared that kinky hair was the test. No less dusky parties whose hair was straight seemed to pass muster all right. Meantime one could hire chairs for ten cents and watch the show — and the show involved the showering of confetti and the douching of bystanders with perfumery, squirted from tiny siphons. Of this custom, I later discovered, the local press was disposed to make a grievance, on the ground that it was a nuisance which had now and then its dangerous features. Certainly it made a most prodigious reek of scent, which was cloying — and besides it got into your eyes and down your neck. You were supposed to laugh and say nothing. I believe this practice has been done away since.

Newspapers in San Juan are plentiful — all selling for three cents and all apparently eagerly read. The *Mogul* and I, being editors and denominating ourselves the Veteran Journalists' Association, bought them all religiously. They come out at varied hours. *El Mundo* is procurable at breakfast.



OVER THE ROOFS, SAN JUAN

El Tiempo (with an English section) comes out accommodately during the forenoon. *Correspondencia* and *Democracia* appear still later. The tourist finds his name dutifully reported, but often spelled wrong, and experiences a thrill.

One who visits both Havana and San Juan will find a certain similarity in the two, apart from the situation of each on the borders of a landlocked harbor. They have much in common as a Spanish heritage, although the Cuban city is by far the larger of the two. They are of nearly equal age and the latitude of each is so nearly the same as to produce a similar development in each case. Havana is the more gay, perhaps, as the larger town is likely to be. San Juan is the more sedate. But the two may be bracketed as having a certain characteristic in common which suffices to differentiate them from the other considerable centers of population in islands of the same general group — to wit, their age and evident permanence.

Both Havana and San Juan lie far enough outside the earthquake belt to have adopted the enduring material, stone, which more southerly localities have found it imprudent to use. In them one finds the high walls, the deep and shaded streets, so pleasant in a climate which is often torrid and never cold. There is a mellowness about the ancient

buildings, mossed and mildewed by centuries of sun and rain, which one misses in the more flimsy and wide-open streets of cities subject to earth shocks and occasional, if not frequent, destruction. Fortunate, indeed, is the tropic city which may safely emulate the Moors of old by lining its thoroughfares with tall houses, closely set, so that the glaring sun makes but fleeting visits to the depths below.

CHAPTER XI

AN ISLAND CAPITAL

IT may serve to give an idea of the climate of San Juan, Porto Rico, to mention the fact that the Palace Hotel (*antes Inglaterra*) has no windows.

It has apertures in the walls, of course — loads of them; but there are no panes therein, chiefly because they are n't necessary. In Porto Rico it is always midsummer. I recall no glass windows in the hostelry, save such as fill the occasional internal openings designed to give light to, but not a view of, your bathroom. The outward windows have shutters, only — to keep out the sun. The air is not only not a thing to be kept out; it is to be invited and encouraged to come in.

Out of the unshuttered window you look across a sea of flat roofs, upon the tiles of which the domestic life of the city is largely led. In the freshness of morning, or in the cool of a tropic evening, you will see the inhabitants disporting themselves there in joyous “dishybill,” with their children and pets. They occasionally take note of you in return. I discovered somewhat to my discomfiture — although I got used to it in time — that while I was taking a

pleasant morning shower-bath in front of a tall open window I was plainly visible to an opulent colored mammy, who signified her good-humor by waving her hand. There was nothing to do but wave back. She and her parrot, which latter hung in a sort of aerial vestibule on the adjacent roof, became at long range my familiar friends.

: The average prevailing temperature of San Juan is probably described in the weather reports as "mean" — after the uncomplimentary way of official documents of the sort. This does it injustice. I have n't an idea what the average midday thermometric reading is, but should guess that it would be around 86° in the shade — a decent summer-time temperature, usually well tempered by a brisk easterly wind from the sea, a trade wind of very dependable character, upon which the island relies for its escape from a too torrid existence. Most of the year it blows with regularity — and curiously enough the most uncomfortable periods are not found in the depth of summer, but rather are said to occur in the spring and the fall of the year.

By staying out of the sun you may easily escape the heat that smiteth at noonday, and if you are on the breezy side of the house you will be comfortable enough. As in most hot climates, all the world does this; and life undergoes a suspension of normal ac-

tivities from lunch-time until along toward four in the afternoon. Then it picks up, goes back to the job, and continues thereon for a goodly part of the night. There is no denying that San Juan is reasonably noisy throughout the evening. The streets are very narrow, necessitating an abundant awakening of the echoes by the warning horns of the motor cars. The trolley cars — there are several lines — proceed at a deliberate pace, but with much clanging of the bell and much squealing on the curves. For early slumber it is desirable to have what the psychologists call a “high noise-threshold” to your sensorium; and the wise will also court a room on the windward side of the hotel, even though this may afford the less inspiring views. For bedclothing a sheet and a mosquito-bar are all-sufficient, save in wholly unusual and abnormal conditions.

My own windows, not being on the cool side, gave compensation in that they not only afforded me a familiarity with the voluminous negress above referred to, but also gave a comprehensive view of the inner bay, the distant mountains, and the tiny nearer hills, which I have come to call the “chicken croquettes.”

Not only is the Palace Hotel devoid of windows. It does away also with a goodly share of roof. It is built around a circular *patio* which is open to the

sky, much like the ancient *impluvium* of the Romans. If it rains — and it rains rather frequently in San Juan, as well as at times very hard — a share of the moisture comes down into the office and makes glad the goldfish in the central fountain. Generally this inundation does no harm, beyond making people pull their chairs back under the covered parts of the assembly place; but in a really torrential downpour I understand the flood encroaches upon the adjacent dining-room. However, the room is all clean white tiles and the rain never lasts long.

It became our custom to stand on the topmost balcony of the hotel, looking down upon the central court, and to cast pennies thence into the fountain — on the theory that if you did this you would some day return, just as they say you will do if you throw *soldi* into the fountain of Trevi at Rome. None of us ever succeeded in landing a coin in the fountain. This procedure is not so extravagant as it sounds, because apart from the occasional purchase of a newspaper you have very little use for our ignoble copper coinage in San Juan.

Naturally, since Porto Rico is a part of the United States, it uses American money and American postage stamps. Unless things have changed there is urgent need, however, for some nice, clean, new money in the island. Under the watchful eye of the



SIDE-HILL STREET, SAN JUAN

American Government, people leaving New York for Porto Rico have been made to exhibit all their cash; and if it is in the form of notes calling for gold or silver on demand, all such bills are taken away from one, and less impressive notes substituted for them. Actual gold, of course, is also impounded.

But the general result upon the money in circulation in Porto Rico has been to produce the dirtiest, shaggiest, flimsiest set of bank notes you ever saw. Porto Rico apologizes for these, but hands them over to you perforce as the best she can find. It cannot go on forever. Sooner or later the Government will have to make a clean-up, gather in the old bills, and start some brand-new ones in circulation there.

Looking back on it now, I do not recall that I saw a single pleasure vehicle in San Juan drawn by a horse. The motor is everywhere, and the least plethoric inhabitants seem to get hold of cars of surprisingly good make. Meanwhile gasoline is extraordinarily expensive — I forget what it costs, but something approaching fifty cents a gallon in 1919, and possibly more since. This is reflected in the rates of motor hire, but it does n't seem to militate against the universal use of automobiles. I saw a horse or two drawing a garbage wagon — but no others. Net result, surprisingly clean streets and

surprisingly few flies. There are some mosquitoes — but nothing like the number you find in Ponce, over on the other side of the island. Some of our party reported seeing cockroaches of truly heroic size promenading the public streets in pairs, but I missed these. Lizards — trim, brisk, friendly little fellows — you expect to see frisking over sunny walls. I think I heard mention of an occasional flea — although much less often than in Sicily or in San Francisco.

Goats and kids are everywhere, and I suppose there are also cows, although I do not recall seeing any. One passing through the country sees hosts of steers and bullocks, but the mooly-cow is probably kept in a sort of secluded harem somewhere. Even in the best hotels the milk leaves something to be desired, and cream apparently does n't exist. The population buys its milk at retail from certain specified milk stations scattered about the city — and a familiar sight is a long queue of people, chiefly women and children, waiting to procure the day's supply. It comes in huge cans borne in a boy-drawn barrow — and the barrow generally arrives at top-speed accompanied by joyous shouts. The first time I heard the milk wagon coming I thought it was the fire engines.

San Juan does n't go in for flowers, so far as I can

discern. There is a splendid garden outside the governor's official palace, and there may be some meager attempts at horticulture in some of those secluded *patios*, which you get glimpses of as you walk around the city. There is a splendid grassy and woodsy terrace overlooking the sea just beneath the ancient Casa Blanca — an old mansion said to have been built by Ponce de León. But if you really want gardens and greenery you have to go out of the congested city and over to the alluring suburbs of Condado and Santurce, where the aristocratic people live in low-roofed bungalows deep in a tangle of bamboo, palms, eucalyptus, and poincianas. I cannot imagine anything much pleasanter than Condado, with its tropical vegetation luxuriating all around, while the blue sea pounds incessantly on a vast white beach just behind your house. New Yorkers are erecting a prodigious and splendid hotel out there — about fifteen minutes from San Juan by tram — which has since been opened. The grounds about it seemed rather bare at present, but a good-sized tree will grow up into being in about four years in that glorious climate — and the possibilities are superb. Besides, there's the beach close behind, where the long Atlantic rollers are forever roaring in, and where the bathing is vouched for as both delightful and free from sharks. I made bold

one day to test the water with a gingerly foot — and found it tepid, as advertised.

Speaking of hotels, one looks for really good ones in but few spots in the island. Those in San Juan and its environs are the best of all and seem to understand what the tourist regards as comfort. Once you get outside you find things more primitive. There is a very decent if ancient resort at Coamo Springs, of which more hereafter; and there are one or two very tolerable houses in Ponce, which is a city even larger than San Juan, with much better shops, but less clean and on the whole rather stupid, save as the convenient center from which to make motor trips.

Outside of San Juan, even to-day, you will seldom find such a thing as a mattress. The dictum is that folded quilts are cooler and therefore more desirable — so the hotel-keeper stocks up with these, folds them two or three times, lays them on a woven-wire spring, and invites you to lie down and rest. This is a mistake, and the first night you will say it is a fatal mistake. The second night you sleep like a baby — partly because you are so worn out. But if tourist travel is to be seriously encouraged, something ought to be done for the hotels of the island, and something also for the steamer service. Good, old-time ships that are safe but slow — such as they

have now — will do very well for seasoned travelers; but their capacity is small and the Porto Rico trip ought to be a more popular one if only the voyage could be made in three or four days in a swift modern liner.

With the lapse of days one forms the habit of going out at evening toward the entrance of the bay, where the Morro Castle is, there to sit on the ramparts and watch the sunset. Distances in this tiny city are never great, and once you are outside the main town there is a long, grassy field that is swept by the grateful sea wind. You walk across this, pausing now and then to pick tiny but very prickly burrs out of your stockings. Out on the point you come to the old fort. You can go in — there's no great bother about that, although they still go through that ancient nonsense about taking away your camera. Not even a war can teach us that tourist kodaks are almost as harmless in old forts as the lizards are. You might take a snapshot of a fifteenth-century bastion and give away some vital secret to the Huns! How? Well, ask the soldier on guard. Maybe he knows! I can't imagine anything of less interest to Hindenburg or Ludendorff than a kodak picture of the Morro — but at any rate they'll never see one.

You are free to go anywhere in the castle after

you have given up your camera. It is a well-preserved old castle. Tradition says that Admiral Sampson bombarded this fortress back in 1898; but if he did, he either did n't succeed in hitting it, or else the "gaping rents" spoken of in Mr. Verrall's veracious book before referred to, have been tastefully repaired. I saw nothing that looked like evidence of a direct hit either at the Morro or anywhere else in town. Maybe Sampson fired blank charges. At all events, he made the island surrender, in conjunction with some troops that landed over on the south side and marched a little way up the old military road. Porto Rico, in the words of Mr. Dooley, capitulated and was welcomed "into our glorious and well-fed republic," where it has remained ever since. It is beginning to think it would like to get out — but I suspect that is rather fashionable talk than real desire. I can't imagine why Porto Rico should want to get out. The island pays no taxes to Uncle Sam. It has its own local government — supervised by an imported American governor, to be sure, and by a handful of other assistants, but not in any oppressive way. It has nothing to worry about — and after so many centuries of worrying and fighting to keep out of other people's hands, I should think the present situation would be a relief. At least America is n't Old Spain.



THE MASSIVE FORTIFICATIONS, SAN JUAN

So the old Morro is still there, and like the other forts in the cincture of ancient walls it is still garrisoned. There are some modern cannon perched along the ramparts, but they are carefully shrouded. The soldiers when we were there confessed that they were bored with the life, for most of them had been there a year, or a year and a half. Their numbers were small, but you could not complain that they were under-officered. They themselves agreed that a general, a colonel, and — until recently — a major, not to mention a captain and numerous smaller fry was ample allowance for something less than a full company of men.

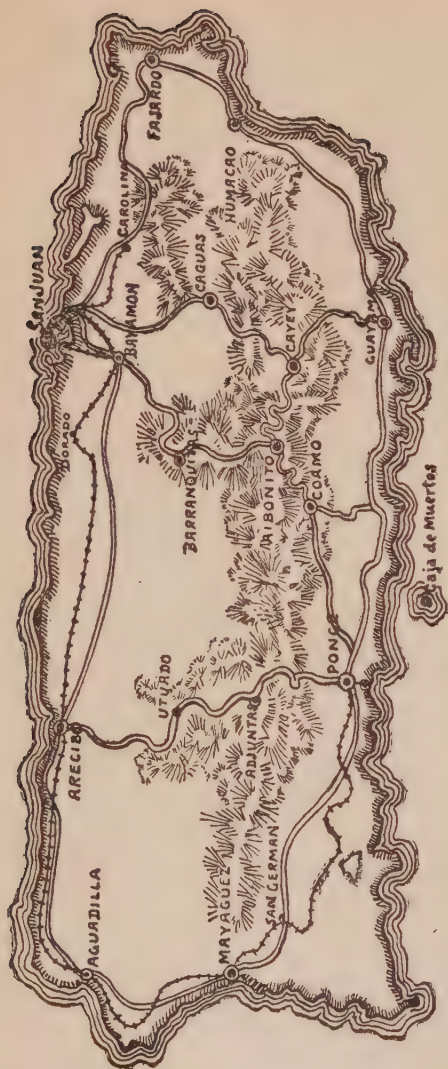
One forms the habit of visiting the forts, partly because they are interesting and partly because the American soldiers there are so affable and so uncommonly glad to see you. Besides, they are such splendid fellows themselves — alert, well-set-up, apparently finding the climate suitable, although, of course, they are prone to curse the fate that puts them there and does n't let them home.

After all, Uncle Sam has done a creditable work in Porto Rico, not changing too many things, not meddling too much, but keeping the place in line. I never saw a handsomer or more appropriate public building than the federal custom house and post-office down by the Marina — a three-story stone

structure with a roof of red tile, quite in the Spanish manner and a delight to see. The new buildings of the city are nearly all handsome — but this is the finest. The local schoolhouses would do credit to the finest capital city in the States.

Taking it by and large I was greatly pleased with San Juan and I want to go back. I enjoyed the city, the people, the climate, the general spirit of things. I even enjoyed a performance of “*La Bohème*” by a touring company that left something to be desired, even though the night was toasting hot, the orchestra abominable, and the scenery improvised. For you could go out between the acts and stroll in the public squares under a wondrous moon — and shops purveying *refrescos* of a strictly temperate but cooling kind were close at hand.

Turning from the city to a contemplation of its environment, you will discover that the island of Porto Rico, which is less than one hundred miles long and not far from forty miles wide, is almost exactly oblong in shape. It lies at the elbow of the Antilles, at the end of the more considerable islands headed by Cuba and just at the beginning of that series of lesser Antilles which string off toward the South American coast. It is a matter of five days’ steaming from New York and it is only eighteen degrees of latitude north of the Equator.



PORTO RICO

It has practically but a single great harbor — that of San Juan. There are, it is true, several other ports of more or less importance at other points around the island at which vessels of large size call regularly, such as Ponce on the south side and Mayaguez on the west; but at these points the ships are forced to lie in open roadsteads. However, the winds of this latitude being reasonably constant and blowing chiefly from the north and east, the roadsteads do fairly well for all ordinary purposes.

Columbus discovered Porto Rico, along with other and less notable islands, on (I believe) his second voyage — although the casual tourist is likely not to be exact about such matters and is usually sure of little save that at least it was not on the explorer's first essay. He happened upon the place by accident, naturally, and coasted along the northern shore until he found a spot where there was visible an inviting cascade. It was a providential chance to replenish the water-casks, so he landed and filled his scuttlebutts with liquid acceptable to the most exacting prohibitionist. There is an active dispute to this day as to which of two possible sites should rightfully claim this honor, both having cascades and local names that have to do with watering-up. One is Aguadilla, the other Aguadas. Those whose zeal for leaving nothing unseen is

unquenchable will do well to play it safe and visit both.

Columbus, finding the misguided natives calling their country by the heathen name of Borriquén, promptly and piously rechristened it San Juan Bautista — Saint John the Baptist. This name is perpetuated only in the capital city which became a port of importance during the governorship of Juan Ponce de León — the same who later sought in Florida the fountain of perpetual youth, as no doubt you well remember. Curiously enough it was the city which was originally named Puerto Rico — the Rich Port — but subsequent centuries have reversed the early nomenclature. The island itself worried along, first as Borriquén and then as Caparra, until Puerto Rico became its accepted name. After the American conquest in 1898 a brave attempt was made to force a universal acceptance of the Spanish spelling — but no one would do it and the island is officially Porto Rico now.

Poor old Ponce de León bequeathed his name to the second city of the island. As a matter of fact, it ought really to be the first city, because it has the largest population and the widest territorial extent — but it is not the capital and therefore has to be content with second honors. Doubtless you were taught by your early preceptresses to speak of

"Pontha" de León, but if you inquired of a native the road to Pontha he would n't know what you meant. They call it Poncy, and leave it to the Castilians of Old Spain to lithp thuch nameth ath thith. Call it Poncy and you'll be strictly orthodox.

Porto Rico is of volcanic origin and still has an occasional earthquake to remind it of its ancestry. They had a perfectly awful one in 1918, which shook the whole west end of the island, knocked off practically the whole second story of Mayaguez, left prints of devastation in Ponce, and bothered San Juan only a little. Several hundred people were killed. But this was the first bad quake in many a long year, and for all practical purposes you may treat the island as a safe place. Your chances of being struck by lightning at home are about the same as those of being killed by an earthquake there, or greater. Apart from the *tremblements* of the earth, as the French say, and an occasional hurricane, the island has no drawbacks at all. I am told there are no poisonous reptiles, or spiders, and no dangerous beasts — save the native chauffeurs.

Through the middle of the island, running east and west like a huge spine, is a mountain range. The loftiest peak, El Yunque — which may mean either the Anvil or the Giant — is a little short of

four thousand feet in height. But the general elevation of this bisecting ridge is not far from three thousand feet anywhere, and it is hard to find any place where roads may pass that is any lower, save close to the coasts. The land along the shore is low and fertile, giving a chance to raise large quantities of tobacco, sugar cane, coffee, pineapples, bananas, oranges, grapefruit, and other tropical crops. A railroad, built by the Americans, runs from San Juan westward along the northern shore, around the west end and down the south side to Ponce. Light railroads extend somewhat beyond these points to outlying districts, but never far from the water. The greater part of the interior is made up of abrupt hills and mountains with deep vales between — all rather intensively cultivated. In the higher lands the crops appear to be chiefly tobacco, coffee, and sweet potatoes, with bananas for variety.

Just at present shipping conditions are not of the best, owing to the war. Wherefore perfectly delicious oranges and grapefruit can be had by the carload for little more than a song, and despairing planters affirm that if something does n't happen pretty soon they'll be ruined. After you have purchased a dozen solid-gold oranges at your corner fruitstand at home, just think that in Porto Rico you could pick up one hundred oranges for a quarter almost

anywhere — and the most delicious grapefruit you ever tasted in your life for very little more!

In the four centuries of Spanish misrule there was built one amazingly beautiful highroad — the military road from San Juan to Ponce, which runs in long, sinuous curves to the top of the mountains and down the other side. It's a grand road still. To this the Americans have since added about two hundred miles of macadam connecting the various points both coastwise and inland, so that at present there is no more delightful land for motoring anywhere under the sun. I have been in numerous spots on earth which advertised alluringly to be "the paradise of motorists," but none that did it more justifiably than Porto Rico. Save where the light railways that serve as supplemental feeders penetrate, all traffic with the interior proceeds by motor trucks. The roads are constantly overseen by sections, and prison labor helps to keep them in repair.

Down in the flat lands near the sea, set in the midst of acres upon acres of sugar cane, are the *centrales* as they are called — the various great sugar mills, of which more hereafter. There is a law which prevents these mills from owning (directly) more than a meager amount of cane plantation; but by some intricate device they manage usually to have a controlling voice over many thousands of acres in

their vicinity. They are so isolated, and they use so much of their own refuse for fuel that they are very far from being blots on a landscape where every prospect pleases and where man is only very moderately vile.

Nearly every writer on Porto Rico mentions the fact that the primeval vegetation of the mountains has been largely cut down, leaving denuded hill-sides. That is to a great extent true. But the tropical growth of trees is very rapid, and the task of reforesting the island, if it were ever seriously attempted, would be easy. As it is, though the hills are too bare, the roads are abundantly shaded by palms and by the flamboyant poincianas, by ilex, bamboo, banana, and numerous other trees the names of which I never was able to discover.

One tree is to me very much like another — and it is always Katrina who is the botanist of our voyages. I have a hazy recollection of seeing a sea of green from our flying motor — a general view of pleasant places. It is Katrina who notes the individual features as we fly along and mentions them with exclamations of delight. I am told to observe and to admire amaryllis, orchids, wandering-jew, and a variety of beauties that I never see at all. I generally murmur, "Yes, yes! Are n't they gorgeous!" — that's easier than admitting that I have missed the spectacle alto-

gether. It's less humiliating. I am constantly besought to ask the native driver — whose language is not mine and whose attention is properly riveted to the road — what sort of tree that is which we are just approaching. So I seize Antonio, or Arturo, by the sleeve with one hand and point to the tree with the other: "*Hey, Arturo! Que classe de arbol?*"

Arturo looks at it with a lack-luster eye and finally announces, "*Yo no sé!*" He does n't know. I relay this news to the tonneau — but by this time there's another tree to look at, or some fields of mariposa lilies, or some new brand of "heathen" fruit. Arturo is rather better on fruits than on trees and flowers — but his names for these gifts of God are usually couched in a form unfamiliar to me and are impossible of translation. So I utter an unintelligible jumble of sounds supposed to sound like what he said, and receive in return the gibes of that ungrateful but inquiring back seat. After long experience I have come to know the "flamboyant" tree when I see it, because it is one glorious mass of red. Palms, any of us can tell at sight — although we may not be sure as to the varieties thereof. Bananas are never to be mistaken for fig-trees, nor fig-trees for bamboos. I hope the thing we have voted to call a mango was really a mango!

You must n't blame me. When I motor I watch

the road. If it is a road which winds up and down mountains, skirting precipices and leaping ravines on narrow bridges, I watch it with the devotion of a mother at the bedside of her first-born. I pray Arturo to slow down, being well aware that there is such a thing as centrifugal force — a thing for which most Porto Rican drivers have a man's contempt — and I have no wish to be skidded into eternity before my time. It is true, as Mrs. Mogul reminds me from the tonneau, that we have n't but one chance to die; but I want to postpone that chance, seeing it is all I am allowed, and not use it up too soon. You can't expect me, sitting there on the bridge of the ship, to take a mere first-class passenger's interest in the beauties of opulent nature. In a rugged country like Porto Rico there is usually a view ahead for about fifty yards, to a point where the road loops around the next shoulder of the mountain. Very likely there's a motor truck coming down — yes, by George, there is! "*Hey, Arturo! Carro que viene!*" The nonchalant Arturo swings out of one danger into another — wheels skimming along the ditch — said ditch being two hundred feet deep by actual count. The bullock-carts that I have missed by a hair, the horses that have saved themselves from being slain by making agile leaps into the coppice on the roadside, the

insouciant peasants who have all but been ushered untimely into Behind the Beyond because Arturo was entranced by the song of a bird while doing a modest forty per hour on the grade, must number thousands. However, I'm still safe and sound. I have lived to tell my tale. And now I intend to take up in more consecutive form the narrative of a motor jaunt through Porto Rico, which started personally conducted by Jesus Peña, proceeded under the tutelage of Antonio and Arturo, and ended in the voluptuous arms of Augustino Rodriguez.

CHAPTER XII

MOTORING IN PORTO RICO

I WILL at the outset say that if you like touring, appreciate glorious scenery most when seen from a splendid road, and are "sport" enough to put up with what, after all, are very decent and clean, though admittedly not first-grade, hotels, you will find Porto Rico eminently satisfactory. It is a land where there falls never any snow. Frost is unknown. The modest mountains, though devoid of Alpine glaciers and Himalayan summits, are rugged and imposing. And it has what every "paradise" should have — luxuriant greenery, lush dells and distant vistas of the open sea.

Hiring a motor in San Juan de Porto Rico ought not to be much more difficult than buying a two-quart pail of blueberries in Mt. Desert in their season — and as a matter of fact it is n't. One has only to make due allowances for the vagaries of the Spanish temperament. The real difficulty arises when you try to hire two motors.

During your peregrinations through the town on the first days of your arrival, the chief impression

you receive is that not only has every native some sort of a car, but also that each is anxious to rent the same for voyages of discovery. "Gentleman, you want hire car for week trip?" You cannot walk around the tiny plaza of San Juan without hearing that formula repeated about a score of times.

The trouble with our caravan was that one car would n't be enough. In addition to Katrina and myself there was the Mogul with his spouse — and in addition to them, the Millers of Dee. The very least we could do with was two automobiles — and the two must have ample baggage space besides. Hence we had made no haste; but as we wandered about the city we gave the multitude of anxious bidders what I have heard denominated the once-over. The Mogul had read somewhere that you must be especially careful not to hire a native driver because the native drivers are prone both to speed mania and to its direct opposite — to wit, sleeping-sickness, or the hookworm disease. There is no middle ground. Either the Porto Rican motorist must be taking the hairpin turns of the mountain highways on two wheels, or else he must be in repose. Such was the dictum of some anxious adviser — and we believed it. We could have no native chauffeurs in ours.

Some one also happened to have letters to a local

banker, and the banker further disquieted us by the news that there were n't any but native drivers. He advised hiring the most careful ones he could discover for us — and intimated that his bank stood ready to assume the custody of last wills and testaments. The matter was referred to him with full powers.

That evening there appeared unto us Antonio. His last name I have never learned. He was a lean and hungry individual, with a habit of extending both arms in an attitude betokening utter despair and an absolute surrender to the fell clutch of circumstance. He was able to speak about as little English as I could speak of Spanish, with the result that there was between us a great gulf fixed — a sort of linguistic chasm to be spanned only by the language of signs. But we managed to elicit from him that he was lord over a five-year-old Buick; that he was willing to engage for a week's trip around the island; that he thought he could unearth another car of about the same vintage for the rest of the party; and that he would bring the other man around. Later appeared the other man — destined to be a mere episode in our earthly pilgrimage, but impressive. He was moustachioed in the fiercest Spanish style, and one looked to hear from his lips such words as "Pieces of Eight!" He

too conveyed the idea that on Tuesday he would be found waiting at the door.

Now I ought to have been wise, for I had seen several hopeful excursionists starting out on this same expedition and I had learned to see them wait. But one always expects to be different in fate from others; and therefore when Tuesday came with no waiting motors we experienced a pained surprise. Finally Antonio drove up only an hour behind time, which was doing fairly well — but he was in the depths of despair. His piratical friend had, it appeared, shamelessly accepted another job. It was Carnival time. Antonio doubted that there was another car in San Juan — that city but yesterday so packed with cars!

In vain did the Mogul assume the portentous attitude of the late Dr. Munyon and read to Antonio an unintelligible version of the riot act. Antonio merely thrust his hands forth in his customary gesture of abject helplessness. However, he would make search. The hotel also instigated a telephonic inquiry. Hopeful boys, with backsheesh in view, scurried busily around the neighborhood. As a result there finally appeared a somewhat dilapidated Dodge, a hopeful but antiquated Ford, and a sort of hermaphrodite Hudson painted up to look quite new, but boasting two different styles of

hub. Partisans of each applicant cheerfully libeled all the others as "no good."

It was the new paint on the Hudson that won — for a while. It seemed the only thing to do. And we were just making a fresh bargain with its master when all at once there descended, apparently straight from heaven, one Arturo, late a soldier of the A.E.F., still in uniform, and mendaciously professing to speak the English language. A gladsome chorus of curbstone admirers acclaimed him superior to all the other rivals. Wherefore we changed apologetically to Arturo—fruitfully surnamed Cantellupi. The Mogul covertly assuaged the disappointed and discarded applicant with a long green bill. It developed that his name was Jesus Peña.

The caravan got away at last to a reasonably good start. It was a lowering day, but that made it agreeably cool.

There is only one road out of San Juan — which city is situated on a sort of island that amounts to a peninsula. It is naturally a frequented thoroughfare, tenanted by a constant stream of traffic of every style. In addition to the multitude of motors there are flying jitneys, trams, laboring bullock-carts, pedestrians innumerable. It is the beginning of the ancient Spanish highway to Ponce — the centuries-old military road. I judge that if there are

speed regulations they are more honored in the breach than the observance.

We swung out of the city, through the suburban villages of Santurce and Rio Piedras (which latter we may translate freely Stony Brook), and through a rolling country fresh and sweet from recent showers and green with a riotous tropical verdure. Dull care was banished. From the rear seat I trolled a merry catch. The road unrolled like a smooth gray ribbon, undulating over gentle hills and winding through fields of orange, tobacco, and cane. Ahead towered the rugged forms of the blue mountains. The Mogul, accustomed to high speeds, sat unmoved beside Arturo as the latter opened up his throttle and began to hit up a brisk forty-five an hour. A hasty glance behind showed me that we had left Antonio and our other car as if nailed to the post. Antony was not in sight. No one knew where he was — but doubtless he would catch us somewhere. Meantime we shot like an arrow into the interior of Porto Rico, which speedily revealed itself as a rugged isle, abundantly sown with way-side public schools.

I cannot now recall how many schoolhouses there are in the island, but I should say I must have seen upwards of two hundred first and last, scattered over hill and dale, never very large, but

each accommodating some tiny and often undiscoverable rural hamlet. Every mile or two there would appear on the roadside a sign, "*Precaucion! Escuela Publica!*"—the Spanish way of telling motorists to look out for school-children. These diminutive huts usually had a decent American flag duly raised on an improvised staff—and within always a dozen or two of youngsters being taught something. We flashed by them, onward and ever upward, seeking the tobacco country of Caguas and Cayey. Steep and denuded hillsides stole upon us ere we were aware—cultivated to their tops as we later discovered. Great white patches on the remote hills betokened fields of tobacco sheltered under cloth, but looking from a distance as if some gigantic fairy had dropped her handkerchief. You can see the same thing on a smaller scale in the Connecticut Valley—huge areas of cheesecloth, carried aloft on the top of bean-poles, so that a man may walk erect under this vast tent and cultivate the weed which cheers and soothes.

Caguas and Cayey are separated by a sort of subsidiary mountain range, which the road surmounts by long, upward curves. It seems a considerable climb to the summit—but when you get there, behold you must descend again to a fresh

inland valley, and climb in turn out of that one to a mountain height greater still. I always dislike that feature of mountain travel. It seems such a pity, after you have labored up to an altitude of twenty-five hundred feet, to go away, 'way down again and then climb another three thousand. But that's what you always have to do. Fortunately the Spaniards who had engineered this road had a good eye for grades and made them easy — at the expense of vastly increased distances. The views, of course, were superb. The clouds kindly held off the mountain-tops, and chance patches of sunlight illumined the vast green depths below. Tobacco gave way to coffee — until I began to think of O. Henry's description of "this fruitstand and grocery-store of a country."

It developed that our Arturo had temperament. He was a graceful creature with soulful eyes — somewhat bleary if the truth be told — the hands of a gentleman, whereof he was immensely proud, and a lithe body which he draped over his wheel in attitudes suggestive of Mercury, new-'lighted on a heaven-kissing hill. Conversation with him soon revealed the fact that his boasted English was deplorably limited. Longer acquaintance indicated that he was not inclined to soil those shapely and well-manicured hands by tinkering the inward

parts of his machine. A year in the army had taught him much — among other things the gentle art of ordering other people to do the distasteful tasks. I noticed in the course of a few days that if we had tire trouble it was the perspiring Antonio who did the heavy work. But if it were a case of gathering wayside flowers, Arturo was there with the willingness to serve. His roving eye lighted with appreciation at the manifold beauties of nature. He esteemed it a privilege to swarm gracefully to the tops of wayside trees to gather queer fruits — the names of which he usually did n't know, and all of which proved to be unripe. He would become utterly oblivious of all else at the song of a bird. The lure of a sudden little river — one is always fording shallow rivers in Porto Rico — was not to be resisted. He must halt and wash those shapely hands!

I could hear the Mogul talking learnedly to him from his perch on the front seat — Arturo cocking an attentive ear and pretending politely to understand. In the meantime Katrina and Mrs. Mogul exclaimed over the opulence of the verdure, noting flowers and shrubs as we flew by, and actually giving them names. As for me, I hung on and formulated prayers for such as are in peril on the high-road. We descended to the depths of still another

valley and swung up the following ascent, in and out the winding curves, round and about mountain spurs enclosing cavernous ravines, climbing, climbing, climbing — until at last we reached the ultimate crest and backbone of the island and looked down upon the Caribbean from the aerie prettily named Aibonito.

From here the road dropped as abruptly as it had risen — still in graceful curves, leaping deep gulches on ancient stone bridges, and affording Arturo a holy joy which manifested itself in rimming the outside edge of unparapeted corners. Even Katrina's joyous comments on the wayside flora now became subdued and fragmentary — and once or twice an involuntary squeak from Mrs. Mogul indicated that she, too, appreciated the dire possibility of a lurch which might land us all untimely in Charon's skiff. However, none came. We got safely to the foot of the grade, turned abruptly into a branch road, squattered at speed across a stony little river, and swarmed up the abrupt grade beyond. The first lap of our ride was over. We whirled with a joyous hoot into Coamo Springs — late, indeed, but not too late for lunch.

One owes Coamo Springs more than a word. It is a resort as old as the Spanish occupation, and once on a time it was a sort of rural Monte Carlo. At

present it is a sedate place where at all seasons of the year tourists and natives go for hot sulphur baths. There is no other hot spring in the island, despite its volcanic origin.

There is a queer old hotel there — a one-story affair with a broad central corridor and wide verandas on each side. All the rooms are open at both ends — one end on the veranda, the other on the central corridor. The door toward the veranda is a slat affair. The one on the corridor is a contraption of two leaves, reaching neither to the bottom nor the top — such as in earlier days you may have seen at the entrance of New York saloons. The result is that one enjoys about the same privacy as a goldfish. One is cool — but semi-public. The night has a thousand snores. And as every door, after it grows dark, looks exactly like every other door, it is wise to be careful about entering what you imagine to be your own room, lest you emulate Mr. Pickwick at Ipswich. I grew accustomed to hearing cautious gentlemen sounding their way along, bleating “Emma, Emma!” in a sort of inquiring voice, until identity had been established.

Down and ever downward from the hotel a covered way leads to the bathing place — a glorious spot where deep cells are provided, opening off a

dim central hall embowered in trees. In each cell is a Roman bath — a sunken pool, into which a neat-handed attendant draws copious supplies of water for your ablutions. She is polite enough to ask whether you prefer hot or cold — but invariably turns on the spout you don't ask for. The fact is, that the cold water is only a few degrees less hot than the other. And when she has withdrawn, you bolt your door, descend into a capacious tank, and luxuriate in such comfort as you probably never knew before. For such as like it, there are dual tanks so that two may bathe at once. And for such as can endure it there is sulphur water to drink. It must be regarded as good for one — otherwise no one would ever do it. It has that taste of warm flatirons mentioned by Mr. Weller.

In the evening you sit on the lawn out under a sky in which the stars blaze with an unwonted splendor. The hills which shut in the vale of Coamo rise half guessed in the night — until chance fires in the withered refuse of the cane-fields suddenly bring them out in startling distinctness. Those familiar with the spangled heavens point out new and unfamiliar southern constellations. The wind is asleep. You would say it was August, though in fact it is early March. You smoke the native cigar — which is cheap but good.

Thus we sat, and one by one sleepy neighbors withdrew from the starlit circle to go questing their rooms, with much tentative "Emma, Emma," and "Lucy, Lucy," in the dusky corridors of the hotel.

CHAPTER XIII

SUGAR

IT was while we were still at Coamo Springs that I had the unexpected thrill of being "paged." All the world was sitting on the lawn enjoying the tropic night — a night so warm and so still that it seemed impossible it could be winter — a night replete with stars so brilliant that it hardly seemed they could be stars. Now and again a red glow would suffuse the heavens — doubtless from fires in the plantation refuse, but glibly described by a neighboring guest to a credulous lady as "the glare of the Antilles." It was then that I heard myself being "paged."

Such an experience always gives me thrills and I imagine it does so to nearly every one but the most hardened. One feels rather set up, rather conspicuous, and at the same time alarmed. In my own case a sort of nameless terror usually overlays everything else — but especially was it so to hear myself besought by a native bell-boy in this remote corner of the world where no one could by any chance know that I was. Therefore some unprecedented calamity must have occurred, moving

detective agencies to seek me out! It was some one on the telephone, they said.

It turned out that there was no cause for alarm. A pleasant voice said that its owner was "Carter '87" — his name may as well be Carter; that he had seen our names in the local paper as late arrivals in the district; and that he hoped we could come and take lunch with him on the morrow at the sugar *central* about fifteen miles away, over which he was lord and master.

Now a *central* is the Porto Rican way of naming a sugar mill, and I had sorely wanted to see a sugar mill. I had been told by all means to do it if I got the chance. And here was Carter, whom I remembered well, inviting me to inspect the second largest one in the island — maybe in the world. I wanted to — but prudence warned me to inform Carter that, like Wordsworth's idiotic little girl, we were seven. I could n't very well leave the Mogul and the Millers of Dee. It seemed to me, over a rather imperfect telephone line, that Carter gasped a little at this news — but he said with creditable promptitude that I must bring them all. The deal went through for one o'clock next day. We then to bed, as Pepys would put it, with great content.

By dint of naming a fairly early hour, we managed to get the reposeful Antonio and the tempera-

mental Arturo into commission with the motors at nine-thirty. It became evident that each was sailing unfamiliar seas. Chauffeurs of San Juan, they had mendaciously caused it to be assumed that the entire highway system of the island was to them an open book. In fact I suspect neither of them had ever done any great amount of driving, and it was sure that they had never gone from Coamo to the southeast along the shore. There is, however, this merit about Porto Rico — you can't very well get lost. There's one main road to where you wish to go, and you cannot possibly lose it. The trouble all comes when you have to drive for five or six miles down a plantation track looking for the main arteries of travel.

However, by dint of asking questions and following the most promising trails we did manage eventually to arrive at the coast of the Caribbean. There were one or two shallow rivers to ford — but the motors of Porto Rico are used to that. The only thing you must n't do is stop in midstream, because if you do the weight of the car sends you hub deep. You poise on the bank, make all snug, set your gears in the low speed — and plough through, very much like the Leviathan in a sea-way.

A very decent white road led eastward along the shore. It was dusty, the rain not being a frequent

visitor to this side of the island. The surrounding country was rather flat and, for a tropical scene, stupid. Nothing but acres upon acres of cane — I forget how many hundred thousand. But there were “heathen” fruit-trees on the wayside to be exclaimed at and identified — always a laborious process. There were occasional funerals to be saluted with much doffing of the hat. I think we never went to ride that we did n’t pass at least two funerals. The casket was invariably borne on the shoulders of a stalwart company, and sometimes there were a few mourners, but not always. The Spaniard thinks he has done his duty by the departed when prayers have been said at home. The mere laying away of the corpse is n’t so much of a ceremony. One is content to put on deep mourning, deny one’s self all social joys for a space, and hire a vast black-bordered space in the local newspaper for a memorial notice now and then.

By the appointed time we whirled up to the rendezvous somewhat the worse for dust, but otherwise feeling first-rate. The *central* lay well to the side from the highroad, and turned out to be a very considerable village. It sat on a tiny eminence overlooking the sea; and in a broad lagoon, protected by a long outlying reef, there lay a tramp steamer loading raw sugar for Boston. The most

prominent thing in sight was naturally the mill — a towering structure of corrugated iron dominated by a lofty stack, from the top of which a wisp of smoke trailed briskly away in the teeth of the breeze.

A tiny railroad branched off over the fields, and on it little trains of cars brought in loads of cane. I have always wanted a railroad like that to play with.

All about lay the needful buildings of the industry which had created them — a vast storehouse, warehouses for the finished product, homes for the help, schools for their children, a trim post-office, and on a hill o'erlooking all the neighborhood, Carter's house. I was glad I came. It looked very like a New England house, and the bathrooms looked like New England bathrooms. Every window stood open to the breeze, and it was altogether like a bland June day at home.

I need n't dwell on the lunch. Carter had apparently no difficulty in dealing with the seven — in fact he said that was a modest number, for occasional visitors had sometimes brought as many as twenty hungry people to see the sugar mill. The dispensation of lordly hospitality was one of his duties as resident manager. Meanwhile the main thing was to see sugar made.

In a general way I suppose we all know that sugar is crystallized somehow out of the juice of the sugar cane. The actual process is more of a mystery. Every one who has traveled much in the Far South has seen fields of the cane — looking rather like exaggerated corn, and apparently much esteemed by natives as a delicacy to chew. They say it is good for the teeth to get a stick of sugar cane and suck it. At all events, the teeth of people addicted to this wild dissipation always seem very white and fine.

Carter warned us that the sugar mill would be found rather hot, for any corrugated iron house under a broiling sun is apt to be so — even without the addition of numerous infernal fires such as are required to convert the cool sap into molasses and eventually into raw sugar. But it was promised not to be unbearably warm, so we plunged into the dusty depths of the factory robed in the lightest habiliments of summer.

It was simple enough to start with. One of the toy trains had just backed up to the door, and the cars were being unloaded one by one. A huge crane dropped its jaws over a car, engulfed the entire contents in one capacious mouthful, swung it easily aloft — and dumped it in a mammoth hopper at the foot of an incline. The cane fell into this hopper every-which-way, much as old-fashioned jack-straws

used to do. At the bottom, unseen but active, there was a deliberate treadmill moving upward, very like a subway escalator. The mass of twisted canes heaved in a disquieting way, suggestive of the deep in a storm — but after a while you could see that the mass really was being propelled slowly up toward a pair of mammoth rollers, which were eating up the stalks as if they enjoyed the job.

We climbed up there and saw the presses at their work. The unsuspecting canes went cheerfully in between the great rollers and were crushed to bits. The sap poured out into a sluice — and the mangled cane went on through four other pairs of rollers, each in turn taking its toll. At the last that cane had n't any more sap left in it than the mummy of Thothmes the Third — and Carter fished out a bit of it to show me how utterly dry and dead it had become. This dried refuse, he said, went to feed the boilers, and he told me how many tons of the stuff went to equal a ton of coal. Of course I've forgotten that useful fact, now that I want to tell about it. I only know that they don't have to use much coal, and that the dried cane makes a perfectly terrific heat. I know, because I went by an open furnace door. I seem to remember that he said, weight for weight, the cane yielded about eleven per cent in actual sugar. The rest went into

molasses and a heat rivaling that which was once turned on for the benefit of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Molasses, in its final apotheosis, can be turned into rum — but not in Porto Rico, which is bone-dry.

For something like nine months out of the year the mill runs day and night. Then comes a lull during which the weary resident manager gets a chance to run home to the States for a bit of vacation. The *central* itself is n't allowed to own outright more than a small tract of cane plantation, but usually the neighborhood manages to get into some kind of holding concern for the use of its adjacent mill. Crops naturally grow rapidly under that wonderful sky and clime. Carter said that usually it was wise to renew the cane plants from time to time, but that he had seen fields where they claimed there had been no renewal for something like sixty years.

We did not actually see sugar made, after all. We saw the juice expressed and beheld it running away in a vast syrupy river through a sluice to the various vacuum pans and sich, that I believe figure effectively in the process of sugaring-off on this gigantic scale. But the heat of that part of the work was so intense as to repel us from visiting the tanks too intimately, and we were hurried on

to the next visible process which was the separating of the sugar itself from the syrup in which it was carried. That was done by centrifugal force, much as cream is separated from milk in any ordinary dairy. You could see this going on from an elevated gallery. An attendant opened a pipe and filled a vast copper cylinder, which at once began to rotate until it was going around at a rate represented by some astronomical figure in revolutions per minute.

At the end the separator was emptied and the sugar was taken out, and you could go down and scoop up a handful. It was raw, in truth — sickishly sweet, and of course brown in color rather than white. I can taste my handful yet. And out beyond were men busily filling gunnysacks with it, and other men sewing them up, and other men piling the bags on carriers, and others shooting them into little cars, and others shoving the cars down to the pier — whence lighters took them to the steamer in the broad lagoon. The wind out on the pier was grateful after the inferno of the sugar mill.

We went into the supply shed — which struck me as approaching in magnitude the train shed of the South Station. It had about everything in the world stowed away there. Mindful of the resourceful country store back in Carter's home town I

asked if they had a pulpit, but he said he thought not. He had a metal casket or two, for emergencies, and about every kind of grocery and canned goods that is known to man; also hardware, dry goods, oil and gasoline. But they were just out of pulpits.

That seemed to exhaust the subject, so we were speedily whirled away by Arturo and Antonio. I appreciate sugar somewhat more than I did — even during the shortage. It does n't look very much like the article you get for your table when it leaves Porto Rico; but, of course, when it gets up to Boston it gets refined — like everybody else in that cultured place — and becomes holier and better. I hope some day to see a refinery at work. But when I want to remember Carter I shall go around to the grocer's and call for a pound of brown sugar, sit down on a hot day in front of a roaring fire, and scoop up a generous handful to eat. Yummy! The first taste is good — but how it stays by you!

CHAPTER XIV

FROM PONCE TO ARECIBO

FROM Coamo to Ponce is but a step as the motor flies — that is to say, short of twenty-five miles by a most excellent road. One of the writers whose works I have read describes this jaunt as reminding one of New England — “either Connecticut or the Berkshires.” It must be, then, because it is so different. It would not occur to me to think of either the Berkshires or Connecticut on that run — save that macadam looks about the same the world over.

The road follows along near the sea, over a gently undulating country flanked on the one side by the blue Caribbean and on the other by the abrupt hills of the interior. The vegetation is not the vegetation of New England — not at about eighteen degrees north of the Equator! It is more like the vegetation of South than North America, naturally.

In the end you roll across a bridge that proudly announces its building by the American army of occupation in 1900 or thereabouts. It is not a very pretty bridge, and it is “hogged” a little in the



ON THE ROAD TO PONCE

middle, as the sailors would say. Possibly this is due to earthquakes, which they have occasionally in that neck o' the woods. But it is a bridge that carries you safe over and therefore it is one of which to speak well. Eventually you pass a country club (members only admitted) and find yourself in Ponce.

Ponce is not a pretty town at all. Owing to the frequency of quakes it seldom aspires to buildings of more than two stories and is usually content with one. The streets are all "dirt" streets. As you pass through the city for the first time you are most impressed by the fire department, which occupies a spacious building near the principal plaza and which daily rolls back the doors and takes off the dust covers to let you see the motorized hose reels. It is a very good-looking fire department. Whether it ever has much work to do I don't know. It did n't have to do any while I was there, but it was on daily exhibition and it made one feel uncommon safe.

Hard by was a cathedral, much the worse for wear because of the unusually big quake of the preceding autumn, which had torn off all the upper part of the façade, but without disturbing a very large and handsome oriel window. Indeed, all down the adjacent streets one might see houses stripped

open and rent by the quake, leaving the upper rooms in somewhat the condition of the doll-houses of our childhood.

Despite the frequent sprinkling, the dirt streets are dusty in the prevailing wind — when they are not a mass of slippery mud. It is n't nearly as attractive as San Juan, and yet it has some things that San Juan has not — notably gardens. One found gardens everywhere, usually walled out of sight, save as the flowering vines and trees clambered over the tops. The ladies affirmed also that it had better shops than San Juan and that the people seemed to speak more English. Nevertheless the prevailing opinion seems to be that Ponce is rather a stupid place — flat, stale, and unprofitable from the tourist standpoint, usually very hot, and always beset by millions of mosquitoes.

Having said which, let me add with decorous haste that during our stay, which was indeed but four days, the air was delightfully cool, and the mosquitoes, while present in the expected numbers, did not seem particularly voracious. Of course they are not the wicked kind of pest that brings the yellow fever. That's all over and done with. Porto Rico has been sanitated to the queen's taste. The Millers of Dee had prudently looked up the mosquito question before venturing thither, but unfortunately

had confused the data. They could n't remember whether the dangerous mosquito landed on you head-first or *vice versa*. We were compelled to take chance.

Ponce is theoretically a seaport — but so is Los Angeles. Ponce is only about three miles from the ocean, and Los Angeles is about twenty — but each is just as proud of the seaport idea as Boston, and each is connected with its real port and docks by tram. All day long, alternating one with another, street-cars go clanging down the dusty road to Ponce Playa and Ponce Muelle — respectively the beach and the pier. If you inspect the beach you will find that it is n't really much of a beach. It is a muddy settlement only less far from the sea than Ponce itself. But the pier is the real thing, and as it projects into the waters it seems to provide about all the actual harborage there is on that side of the island.

There are, however, one or two small islands just offshore which help to make it look like a harbor, and within sight there is a very considerable outlying island rejoicing in the name of "Caja de Muertos" — the Dead Man's Chest. Some one had told the Mogul that this was what Stevenson had in mind when he referred to that immortal ditty:

"Sixteen men on the Dead Man's Chest —
Yo-ho-ho, and a bottle of rum!

Drink and the Devil had done for the rest —
Yo-ho-ho, and a bottle of rum."

Now I always thought that it meant the men were sitting on the dead man's ditty-box — but the Mogul says no. He believes that they were sitting marooned on the Caja de Muertos. It seems fishy to me.

There are just about three really good hotels in Porto Rico, and at least one of these is in Ponce. It is a good hotel as such things go in the tropics. It is kept by a delightful old French lady, a widow who speaks all languages indifferent well. Mindful of her homeland after forty years of absence she calls her hostelry *Hotel Frances — Anglicé*, "French Hotel." It occupies a wind-swept corner and runs in two spreading wings along two streets, a deep courtyard of much greenery lying within. One breakfasts in the court, if one wishes. One dines in a lofty banquet-hall, the doors of which open full on the outer square next the main street. A homelike touch is afforded by the railroad which runs just across the street and devotes the nocturnal hours to the shifting of freight cars. Between the engine bell and the mosquitoes your first night in Ponce in the French Hotel is likely to be wakeful. The second night, thanks to weariness ensuing from the first, one does n't mind.

Every room has a tiny alcove in which are the toilet arrangements, including a shower bath. This appeals to one more at first sight than later — because in the morning when you essay the matutinal shower you discover that forty divisions of shock-troop mosquitoes are mobilized there, ascending in a cloud as you enter in the state of nature suitable to bathing, and bent on making as much as possible of the glorious opportunity which your condition affords. Your one recourse is to drown them while they bite.

Arturo and Antonio, charioteers to our caravan, did not take very kindly to the programme we unfolded before them as to motor trips from Ponce. They had bargained for so much money a week, plus allowance for their keep on a *per diem* basis — but it developed that their idea of a week's trip was to circle the island, always in one general direction, and always toward the point of beginning. The idea of scooting away across the island to Arecibo and then away back to Ponce, when one could go back in much less time to San Juan, seemed to them both extravagant of gasoline and destructive of profits. "Gas" in Porto Rico costs some grandiose price which I have forgotten — about fifty cents, for a guess. Moreover the roads, while splendid, are hilly and use up a lot of distance in curves in order to

cover forty linear miles, which means a lot of fuel. Arturo and Antonio looked glum enough when they found out how the week was to be put in. For the moment they had no recourse, but as you will see, Arturo at least was equal to the emergency.

I arose bright and early, awakened by a tropic sun. The public garden across the way was deserted save for Arturo Cantellupi, who was revealed manicuring his shapely hands while reclining in unstudied grace upon a park bench under an umbrageous tree. Antonio was nowhere to be seen. The schedule called for a start at eight-thirty — but by this time one knew that eight-thirty meant an hour later, at least in P.R. This is the reverse of daylight saving.

Arturo spied me, airily attired, on my balcony and waved a cordial salute. His lips moved and I caught floating up to me the familiar morning plaint, "Give me some money. I broke." Whatever the linguistic deficiency of Arturo and Antonio, the bright lexicon of their youth at least contained the English words most useful for expressing complete financial destitution. "I broke" was the usual announcement which accompanied the call of incense-breathing Morn.

Having wafted sundry kopecs to the waiting Arturo, I disappeared within and Arturo betook him-

self to the lair in which he kept his car. One always trusted he would appear again — and usually he did; but that was before he despaired of coming out even on the gasoline question. To-day at least he was back with Antonio at nine-thirty and we took the Arecibo road.

I suppose there may be finer rides in the world. There are said to be some at least as fine in Porto Rico itself. But to my mind that flight from Ponce to Arecibo in the freshness of the morning has advantages over any ride that it has been my fortune to take — and I've had some fine ones first and last, over the Amalfi Road, over the Grande Cornice, over divers and sundry Swiss passes, and over the Greek mountains from Andritsæna to Olympia; but none of them offered anything much more splendid than that gorgeous tropic highroad, as it wound in spiral curves up the mountain ridges of Porto Rico. Arturo was in his element. The motor roared obedient to his toe. The squawking of his horn awoke the echoes of the mountain glens. We missed peasants, bullock-carts, good old-fashioned Concord buggies (which are still common in rural Porto Rico), wayside funerals, and mammoth motor lorries, all by the merest hair. Antonio, his locks floating in the wind, followed after. We rose up on wings as eagles. Ponce and its plain soon lay

at our feet. In an hour we were weaving our way amid the remote and craggy heights that we had marveled at from below. The banks were aglow with flowers. Water dripped coolly down the sides of shadowy cliffs, and broad-bladed banana-trees arched the road. After the flat stupidity of the plain these verdure-clad mountains, cloaked in fruit and coffee, were an unmixed delight.

Then down, down, down — sweeping around blind corners, skimming the edge of precipices, dashing through tiny rivulets at the apex of deep mountain dells, across an inland valley, up another mountain chain, and on, on, on — always at a conservative thirty-five to forty miles an hour! I confess I like to take my scenery in more leisurely fashion — but Arturo had promised to land us in Arecibo in three hours and a half. He did it. Antonio was not more than fifteen minutes behind. I would n't have missed it for five hundred dollars and I secretly affirmed that I would n't do it again for fifty thousand dollars — with Arturo.

Arecibo itself was n't much to see. The Atlantic Ocean roared with incessant breakers against its white wall of beach sand, and the sun bore down with more than Oriental splendor. ^W_{PM} After a brief stroll on the water-front I was virtually blind and deaf — between the glare of the sun and the roar

of the surf. But there was a "tolerable locanda," as Baedeker would have said of the inn, and a lunch that was reasonably good.

It was on the way home that the guileful Arturo bethought himself of a plan for getting out of his ruinous bargain. His engine suddenly began to give trouble — but not until we were within hail of Ponce. Down the last long grade he was able to keep moving by reliance on the good old law of gravitation; but once we were in the plain and only two miles from home, his machine simply lay down and died. He tinkered vainly for an hour in the dusk. Then a Ford came by, with two extra seats in it — and in these Katrina and Mrs. Mogul were ferried to the French Hotel. They reported later that Arturo's mad driving was mild as milk by comparison. The Ford raced another Ford all the way to town, through traffic, and up to the hotel door. And its driving was like the driving of Jehu.

The Mogul and I stayed by the ship until after dark Antonio came back with a relief party. We got home to dinner. Arturo got home somehow during the night — "all done — finish." He was paid off and discharged to his apparent relief and to the envious dismay of Antonio, who had n't thought of having his machine go bad so opportunely. It looked as if we were marooned.

And then out of the dark there came one Agustino Rodriguez, with a glorious big new car, resplendent in red paint, anxious for a cargo back to San Juan next day. We were saved. I had uncomfortable thoughts of going back by rail—an eleven-hour jaunt; but Rodriguez saved the situation admirably. He proceeded at a pace consistent with inward and holy calm. At the finest points he invariably paused and inquired solicitously, "You wish make picsh?" an invitation to embalm the scenery permanently in kodak form. And at an hour conformable to Sunday luncheon he had us back at the Palace Hotel in San Juan, sunburned, dusty, and well content.

Next day while walking in the Plaza, Katrina was aware of one who, from the shade of the ilexes, uttered an ear-arresting "Pzst!" It was Arturo the Canteloupe. He had got the defunct car home after all — probably with a lucrative fare, at that. And so far from bearing malice, he was bowing, smiling, and waving a shapely and well-manicured hand.

So much for motoring in the island. It affords a pleasant interlude and the fleeting experiments chronicled here by no means exhaust the possibilities. I have said nothing of the easterly end of the island toward Fajardo — perhaps in its way the pleasantest of all, because of its greater coolness in addition to its prospects of mountain and sea. I



IN THE GARDENS OF THE CASA BLANCA

have omitted the easily possible excursion through San German with its venerable church to Mayaguez — a town which, while presently stricken as the result of recent quakes, is of growing importance as a port of call. One with sufficient time at his disposal will discover these things for himself and will upon mature acquaintance choose as his favorite haunts the places which most nearly fulfill his heart's desire.

But the universal conclusion, I suspect, will be that after all is said and done the most livable part of Porto Rico is in the environs of San Juan, with its delectable suburbs, its teeming harbor, its gayety, and an abundant social life of which a prolonged stay usually suffices to make one most agreeably aware. The grassy spaces outside the walls, with their broad outlook upon the illimitable ocean; the shady grounds of the venerable Casa Blanca; the moss-grown old fortresses; the indescribable mixture of the modern with the ancient, of the present with the past; the survivals of the half-legendary Spanish days rubbing elbows with the trig new schools, new hospitals, new universities — all these are the special charms of San Juan. There is, I am told, a promising plan on foot for a genuine college to be devoted chiefly to vocational culture, the beginnings of which have already foreshadowed

success, in a more remote part of the island; but to me San Juan remains the chief of Porto Rican memories. San Juan is the first sight that greets you after five days of sailing — and it is the last that attends you when the vessel on which you sail turns again home.

PART THREE
JAMAICA

CHAPTER XV

KINGSTON

THROUGH the open porthole as I woke, I became aware of an incredibly splendid star. It was low on the horizon and it glared like an enormous headlight in the first flush of dawn. It was probably Venus.

I sprang from my bunk and thrust an eager head into the morning freshness. The sea was calm and the white ship was rushing through it joyously, leaving little waves of foam. Over in the east against the growing light of another day could be seen masses of tumbling mountains — very obviously the southern headlands of Haiti. It was the sort of morning that will always justify calling your wife from slumber in order to share it. I called Katrina — who thrust another eager head out of the adjacent porthole and also saluted this distant prospect of the isle containing the Black Republic. And then it was time to pack the trunk, because between-decks in these low latitudes it gets very hot at midday and one is wise to stay on deck as much as one may.

If we saw Haiti at dawn we should be in Jamaica at eve. Hence the trunk.

The island of Jamaica is far-seen. When we came on deck after breakfast, there it lay on our starboard bow — a blue cloud which the eye at first refused to accept as mountains. By noon it was close at hand and the various features of it were more plain to discern. Yet always one beholding a rugged coast from far at sea refuses to consider it personally at all. That this is a land of men is hardly realized. Men must be microscopic ants, indeed, when you look upon this heaving mass of mountains! What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? Or the son of man that Thou visitest him? Here is the immensity of the sea, and yonder the vastness of the land rising fold on fold, in mountain or in cape. If there be men, they are lost. They are atoms. You face the great elements of God's creation; and man — who boasts himself God's noblest creature — is forgotten until you get ashore and lose the perspective. Then, alas, man forces himself upon you as both very real and very important.

We coasted along the eastern shores of Jamaica all the forenoon. B., who had lived there as a boy and who still had possessions in the island, produced a glass and through it revealed his plantations and his house. And we knew that from the house we, too, had been observed; for presently a motor scurried away down the shore road to head us off at

Kingston — its flight betokened by a cloud of dust. Red cliffs along the shore opened and revealed inlets where tiny boats were loading bananas and cocoanuts. The abrupt slopes were covered with that tropical verdure which always seems to a northern eye so “stagy” and unreal.

Then we swung westward and overtook the sand-spit that thrusts out for several miles, in a long, curving arm, engulfing a sheltered bay and forming thus the great and perfectly sheltered harbor of Kingston, the capital city. On the very tip of this sandy parenthesis perches a tiny hamlet named Port Royal, which is the quarantine station — a hot, palm-embowered settlement of red roofs set amidst greenery, and strongly suggestive of a shrimp salad with lettuce.

We lay a long time at Port Royal awaiting the port authorities — who apparently were taking their siesta and had no mind to be aroused untimely. Hard by the U.S.S. Dixie was fast aground in a shoal, and naval tugs labored to get her free. The cool sweep of the trade wind mitigated the sun's midsummer glare. The palms on shore waved their fans — as O. Henry says, “like an awkward chorus heralding the entrance of a prima donna.” The captain, anxious to get into port, cursed the stolidity of the quarantine — and we waited.

I now approach with diffidence and all due humility the story of how Katrina and I figured for an hour or two as moral lepers, suspected by the Government and avoided by our comrades of the ship.

The port officials finally arrived. They were native Jamaicans, dusky of skin, but loyal subjects of King George. They wore white suits, white helmets, and were garbed also in a little brief authority. They came up a ladder and we were all ordered to meet them in the dining-saloon. This is quite the usual thing, and one never gets over the uneasy feeling that one is a potential criminal — or a potential plague-spot. But as a rule nobody is, and after a while the red tape is exhausted so that all hands may go on.

This day there came also a native officer of immigration whose disposition was to magnify his office. He first pounced upon Mr. B., whose two children were with him, but who were not mentioned in the passport. Aha! Here may be trickery! "Sah, you say these your two children. The passport not mention them! How I know they your children?"

Mr. B. said he knew they were his, but the dusky inspector brushed this aside as not evidence. It seemed to him a very dark, dire, and probably dangerous business. That any sane man would make himself trouble by traveling with children not his

own did not strike this suspicious party as at all unlikely. So he set the B. family aside for further consideration. Then he pounced on Mr. C., who carried a British passport.

"Your name don't sound English," proclaimed the inspector with a glare of further suspicion.

"And you don't look English," retorted C., who is in fact Welsh with a nine-hundred-years-old name.

This silenced the inspector and C. got by.

Then came our downfall. I presented passports bearing pictures of Katrina and me. We are not proud of these pictures. They make me look like Big Bill Haywood in a curiously angry mood, while Katrina looks like Emma Goldman. The inspector compared us with the pictures. I blushed. The inspector looked dubious.

Then he brightened — he had found us out — and he pounced on us with all zest. "You have not got a visé for this place," he shouted.

"A visé? Do I need one?"

"Yassah. You goin' to have trouble gettin' asho'."

"No one told me to get one," I faltered — which was true. For with all the red tape I had to go through in New York no one had ever told me to seek out the British Consul for a visé in order to go to Jamaica. I knew you had to do it in war-time, and even in peace if you were going to queer places like

Russia and Turkey. But Jamaica? Well — the man was evidently right and we were wrong, and our good repute fell from us like a garment. We were alone to blame, too. We ought to have known — but we did n't.

"You cannot land until you get a permit from the inspector-general," thundered the potentate in a voice suggestive of dungeons and boiling oil. "You can't land!"

K. and I, very crestfallen, slunk away and sat isolated on the decks. Spies! Obvious alien enemies! One sweet lady came and sat with us, and cheered us as best she could — she was Mrs. B., suspected of not owning her own children. Together we surveyed a palm-clad world from which the glory had departed.

And then came the captain, tall, tanned, cheerful, and contemptuous of red tape, to say we should be cared for in due season in Kingston. "You won't be delayed an hour," said he. "This always happens to some one. The consul always comes aboard and fixes them up."

So it proved. The consul did appear — a delightful gentleman from the South who brushed all difficulties aside and made the rough places smooth. Inside of a quarter-hour we were free. Before most of the passengers we had passed the customs, and

before sunset we were ensconced in a breezy room at the Myrtle Bank Hotel looking forth through a palm-dotted park toward the bluest of blue harbors. The troubles of the afternoon vanished as if at an enchanter's wand. The lawn was gay with fair women and brave men, sitting at little tables and sipping things no longer to be had in the United States.

To those of us who are now in that blest estate called middle life, it hardly seems a score of years since the Spanish War. Why, it's only yesterday! And yet it really is almost twenty-five years since we first had "Kingston, Jam." as the dispatches used to call it, brought seriously to our attention.

In those days the festive press correspondents who hovered around the southern coast of Cuba used to make a bee-line for Jamaica when they had news to send. Jamaica lies only a scant hundred miles south of Santiago de Cuba, and as the cable office was around on the southern side of the island, at Kingston, that was where most of the news came from — invariably labeled, "By way of Kingston, Jam.; delayed in transmission."

Now, Kingston, if the truth has to be told about it, is one of the hottest, dustiest, and, at first sight, most unprepossessing cities in the world. It leads a lazy and largely uneventful life — save on those

rare occasions when the Spanish War sends the invading reporters scurrying thither to file more or less mendacious messages, or when an earthquake mixes things up, or when a colonial governor reveals a discourteous desire to tell the American navy to go to blazes, or maybe when a hurricane comes along. At all other times Kingston is simply a flat, hot, dusty, negro town, with an incomparable harbor and a lassitudinous climate.

The last great earthquake was in 1907. The city has not yet entirely recovered, and as it lies just above a sandy substratum which feels to an excessive degree the earth tremors whenever they occur, it lives in a semi-conscious apprehension as to the next big quake. Hence it does not go in for buildings of a very imposing character, but constructs rather lightly with a strong predilection for the corrugated iron brand of roof. The streets are open and wide — where, according to all the traditions of a hot climate, they ought to be narrow and very deep so that they might be cool. Architecturally and scenically there is no comparison between Kingston and San Juan in Porto Rico, which does not show the latter to advantage.

I have said Kingston is a negro town, but in that respect it is like every other place in Jamaica. Traces of the Spanish occupation are difficult to find,

whereas in Porto Rico they are everywhere. But of course that is only natural. The Spaniards did n't last long in Jamaica — not more than one hundred and fifty years — and the British have had the island ever since the piping times of Cromwell. The really curious thing is that traces of the current British occupation are almost as hard to find as traces of the ancient Spanish. I used to wonder at finding the Americans had made so small an impression on the outward face of things in San Juan, after twenty years of control there; but what shall one say of Jamaica, where after several centuries of colonial oversight the British have made similarly small outward impressions on the island?

To be sure, the native negro speaks English — but it is not always very good English; and more especially when one overhears two natives in animated conversation it is difficult, indeed, to comprehend. It might be a foreign language as well as not, and I suppose it amounts to that. But it is a rather fascinating language, uttered in a voice that makes you sigh to be reared on bananas yourself if it will produce any such melodious tone after a generation or two.

You will probably be told, when you first go to Jamaica, that the negroes are insufferable beggars. The fact is they are n't any more insufferable than

any beggars in any land where tourist travel is common. The wayside children will gleefully extend their hands shouting, "Gimmee monee!" But they don't expect you will give them money, and they grin over the demand as if they knew it was a delicious joke. I have not discovered any marked propensity among the adult population to beg — not nearly so much as I have observed in Italy. But first impressions are bound to be strong and lasting; and the fact is that one landing in Kingston among the water-front darkies will be impressed at first by the mendicancy common to all water-fronts in the world.

It begins when the steamer is being warped into her pier. A score of naked boys, as black as ebony, will certainly be disporting in the sea — precisely as they do in Madeira, or in Naples — swimming about, rolling over, diving after coins, and beseeching the curious crowd that hangs over the steamer rail to throw money down in order to give them the chance to show their aquatic prowess.

"Shoot me a nickel, Judge!" (The Jamaica darkey loves to flatter you with titles.) "Shoot me a nickel, Doc!" — or maybe he hails you as "Chief." Those to whom all this is a novelty will of course provide the necessary largess and the scramble that

ensues among rival divers is on the whole well worth the donation.

By the time the ship is made fast and by the time passengers are officially permitted to go ashore, the land army of the predatory poor is always mobilized and waiting. It takes the form of volunteer porters and carriage touts. The dock is a hot place, smelling of spices and carefully fenced off from the mitigating breeze. It is roofed with the omnipresent corrugated iron, cooking under the blazing afternoon. One pays whatever price one is asked, to be quickly out of it. One is conscious that it is a country where, to say the least, white men do not predominate. Customs officers are of dusky hue. So are the porters, drivers, chauffeurs, and dock watchmen.

Now, if you are wise and if you have had experience with landings in strange ports, you will make up your mind to be more or less agreeably swindled as the price of your initiation. One may not complain. It's the way of the world. It used to be just as common in Boston, when the hackmen charged unsuspecting visitors a dollar to drive from the old Lowell Depot to the Fitchburg Depot — only a few doors away. I suspect it is done everywhere. So you cheerfully shell out small change as you progress down the aromatic pier, sweltering past

the customs; and finally you emerge in the dusty street beyond, where rival claimants bespeak your patronage for their vehicles, each of them frankly a highway robber preying upon the innocent.

On the second visit you will be wise and not such an easy victim; but that glorious first time is sure to be a harvest for the myriad who find in steamer-day their chief source of revenue. The motor-driver unblushingly asks you \$1.50 to take you to the Myrtle Bank — five minutes away at best. The light local carriages cheerily demand fifty cents — although next day you will find that the regular fare for a “course” is only sixpence per person. Who cares? This is Jamaica — and a week ago one was freezing in New York! Take, O Jehu, thrice thy fee!

Riding through the late afternoon toward the hotel gives you a poor first glimpse of the town. You had n't looked for just this kind of a place. You had probably thought of it as ancient, with moss-grown walls casting a grateful shade. Instead it is all painfully new — hardly a dozen years old. Evidently it has n't rained very lately, or if it has it has dried up. Things have a rather barren look. The structures along the street seem discouraged and rather transitory. But eventually you turn into the courtyard of the Myrtle Bank and forget

all about the rest — because all at once you have come upon genuine pleasantness and peace.

No one is more alive to the fact that “Myrtle Bank” are two distinct and separate words than the telegraph office — one notes little points like that at a shilling a word! Presumably there is a justification alike for the separation and for the use of the epithet “Myrtle” — although you will probably look in vain for the latter. But you will speedily agree that the prospect from the hotel, looking through an avenue of palms across a fair green lawn to the smooth bosom of the harbor, is infinitely beautiful; and when you discover those people in white garments seated in the shade below, sipping those mysterious beverages from tall glasses, the conquest is likely to be complete. You suddenly remember that you are hot and thirsty. The procedure indicated in your case is perfectly clear. So you descend, secure a comfortable rocking-chair on the lawn, and consult with the gentlemanly attendant, who hovers watchfully about, as to the most suitable treatment for one just arrived by steamer from an arid and austere land. The waving palms of Jamaica are by no means the only insignia of an oasis which the land has to show.

The most impressive thing about Kingston is always the heat. Being on the south side of the

island, it is naturally warmer than the towns of the north coast. It lies on a gradually rising slope which extends back several miles from the sea and then rather abruptly becomes a first-rate mountain something like seven thousand feet high. The chief peak of this mountain, called Blue Mountain and famed for its coffee, is seldom visible owing to persistent clouds. But at evening — or perhaps more often at very early dawn — it is often clear and always decidedly impressive.

Down on the shore where Kingston lies the temperature is that of a good, hot summer day — perhaps 90° in the shade — but usually tempered by a wind which blows off the sea during the daytime, and almost invariably by a cool breeze off the mountain by night. If you are wise you will seek quarters on the landward side of the hotel; for while this is going to make it pretty hot in the daytime, it is almost sure to give you a decently cool night. People on that side of the hotel tell me they use blankets. On my side, which is toward the water, blankets strike you as a superfluity. My chamber door has a lattice, however, which you can hook — thus giving you a draught of air if you don't mind a modified publicity during slumber.

I hasten to add that the Myrtle Bank is a very admirable hotel, and that it shares, with the Titch-



THE WAVING PALMS OF JAMAICA

field in Port Antonio, the distinction of being the only really pretentious hostelry in the island. Not that there are no other places to stay — for there are several, and very comfortable, too. But these twain are the only really first-grade hotels; and they are run, like so many other things in Jamaica, by the United Fruit Company. Years ago I used to be told that the U.F. Co. seemed to operate “nearly everything in Jamaica but the flag” — and now they will tell you that it runs about everything there that Sir John Pringle does n’t. The United Fruit is vastly more in evidence, certainly, than the British Empire; and I am convinced that what things it does in Jamaica, as in other islands and countries of the Caribbean, it does extremely well.

After two or three somnolent days — during which you buy a new straw hat, or a pith helmet, and get used to the weather — you begin to poke about the town and find it much better than you expected at first. The main streets are still disappointing, architecturally — but you must n’t expect lofty houses, or very much brick and mortar, in a town which periodically tumbles into a heap because of some seismic disturbance. You find some rather decent shops — with no wares to sell which will seem to you at all bizarre, but with salespeople with whom it is a pleasure to deal. After the

studied discourtesy of many a New York shop the soft-spoken Jamaican clerk is a delight.

Then there's a great public market which everybody goes to in the early forenoon before the sun gets fully tuned up to its day's task. It is a vast open-sided shed, roofed with the inevitable iron and surrounding a sunlit square. You can buy nearly everything here that is good to eat. The exotic fruits of which you have heard — mangoes, bread-fruit, custard apples, star apples, ackies, yampies, plantains, yams — are all around, but you will probably find that they are n't really ripe until next month. There are vegetables, both familiar and otherwise — peas that have funny, bunchy pods, each pod in its separate compartment. But the tourist in quest of something to carry off as a memento will always drift over to the department where native baskets are to be had and will find therein abundant reward. Besides, it is a genuine pleasure to do business with these children of nature, with their soft-spoken negro dialect in which one is always called "Massa" or "Mistress." One begins to fancy one's self! If I have heard one woman I have heard a hundred, moaning over the inability to import half the islanders of Jamaica to help solve the problem of domestic help in "the States."

Transportation about town is accomplished chiefly by light Surrey wagons, known to the people as "busses." There are trolley cars, too, but they are useful chiefly to the residents who know how to use them. For the casual visitor the "bus" affords a cheap and sufficiently commodious vehicle. When you don't want a bus there are sure to be a dozen waiting in the next street. When you do want one they have generally vanished; but one will turn up within a few blocks, always, and there is never any quibble over fares. Everybody knows it's sixpence a head — and as that is absurdly little, of course everybody rides. It is too warm to walk comfortably, anyhow. The little and rather bony horses seem not to mind it.

Motor traffic is small, for the reason chiefly that "gas" is both scarce in quantity and prohibitive in price. The reigning figure this winter (1920) has been one dollar a gallon (British), or about ninety cents a gallon (American). On some occasions, when we have been motoring in outlying places and the tank got low, we could n't buy gasoline for love or money — and had to telephone back to that Good Fairy, the United Fruit, which could apparently rub a mysterious lamp and produce gasoline on a pinch almost anywhere — even as Moses smote the rock and produced a spring in the wilderness.

To atone for various shortcomings I went on Sunday to the church and sat among the people. It was an experience. I don't know how you had conceived it, but my impression was that the colored brother was always an African Methodist, or about every sort of church but the Episcopalian. In Jamaica he is of the Church of England, and what's more he does n't have to be prodded into attendance. The good local canon with whom I talked after the service told me that on Sundays the church was literally packed twice a day — at early morning communion and at vespers. At the midday service the crowd was smaller, but still impressive. Its Sunday clothes were a revelation. I saw one negro mammy with a court train nearly ten feet long.

"We don't draw the color line here, as you observe," said the canon. "Most of my parish are colored people, and white and colored worship together."

The choir boys were all negroes — with the exception of one who seemed to me to be either Japanese, or Chinese. In fact you become used after a time to the presence of numerous Celestials, against whom there is apparently no local prejudice or exclusion policy. I recall seeing none in Oriental dress; but the features were unmistakable and inter-marriages have not eradicated the distinctive cast of

countenance. One of the most ostentatious of the buildings in Kingston is the Chinese Free Masonic Home.

After a bit you become quite used to seeing everything official done by the negro. There is an ebony policeman on guard at the corner — a most gorgeous policeman in a hot-looking uniform of blue, with loads of torrid red trimmings and brass buttons. He grins a broad and charitable grin. I imagine his pride keeps him cool — for it's a poor rule that won't work both ways.

They always tell you, as in Porto Rico, on no account to hire a native chauffeur for a motor excursion, because the negro drivers are so reckless on the mountain curves — and then you discover that you can find none but native drivers anywhere. England, which rules the country, maintains a governor whom you seldom or never see. Apparently the negroes do the rest, ably assisted by a very small white population and by the extensive activities of the United Fruit. And yet, while there are something like 900,000 negroes in the island, I have been told that not more than 28,000 are registered to vote — because there is a tax of ten shillings (about like our two dollar poll-tax) which only that number either care, or are able, to pay. Not a prodigious amount of native voting is therefore done, and yet

every one seems fairly comfortable about it. I heard no mutter of unrest such as I heard so frequently the year before in Porto Rico. In Jamaica, man evidently wants but little here below and gets that little easily. Fuel problems worry him not at all. He wants ice rather than coal. A few pennies a day will keep any Jamaican going in the matter of food. It is an easy land to live in; and although it has not as yet seen its way clear to embrace the glorious doctrine of the teetotalers, I have to report that drunkenness among the natives seems very far from common. Perhaps this is due to the prices. The Hindu people — for there is a sizable coolie population in Jamaica — are prone to celebrate a little on Saturday nights, and there is usually an amusing session of the local police court every day, in which neighborhood quarrels get themselves aired; but on the whole Jamaica seems on casual inspection to be a happy land.

You will not be many hours in Jamaica before you realize that the present greatness of the island rests in the first instance upon the banana. About half a century ago a New England sea-captain, Lorenzo Baker, out of Wellfleet, Massachusetts, touched at the island bringing down with him from the North a general cargo. Having discharged it and entertaining the thrifty seaman's aversion to returning home in

wholly unremunerative ballast, he cast about for something wherewith to fill his ship. Nothing but green bananas appeared to be available, and as a last resort the Cape Cod skipper took a sporting chance. At that time, incredible as it may seem, the banana was almost wholly unknown in northern latitudes. A few — a very few — had been brought into New York, but the reception accorded them was not sufficiently flattering to warrant a further importation. It remained for Captain Baker to bring into Boston — always an appreciative town — the fruit which is now so popular and so highly important in the domestic economics of Jamaica.

So profitable did this venture prove that Captain Baker went back and got some more — eventually acquiring lands of his own for banana culture and ultimately evolving the transportation system which, together with the plantations, formed the kernel of the present United Fruit Company. In short, Cap'n Lorenzo builded better than he knew, or could possibly have dreamed.

The number of bunches of the fruit imported into the entire United States in, say, 1870 was but a few hundred. By 1900 the trade had grown to a total of \$6,000,000 a year — and I have no statistics at hand to show what it is now, twenty years later, with the prices of all things away up in the

sky. But I do know that from the tiny beginnings there has grown up a colossal "interest" which is under American control and which has proved to be the most successful exploiter of the tropics since the bygone days of Old Spain. Nor has the exploitation been a one-sided matter, as I may possibly have remarked elsewhere, since the condition of every part of the tropics thus invaded has been immensely improved in the process.

The banana is a surprising tree — if indeed it be proper to call it a tree. In some ways it is more like a gigantic lily growing out of a species of enormous bulb. The claim is made that once a root is established it will spring up and bear fruit within eight or ten months. It sends out quantities of shoots — but these are usually cut back leaving one main trunk to bear fruit this year and one or two others to be ready for the next crop. It must be a poor hut in Jamaica that has n't a few banana-trees in its front yard.

Always the banana-tree is an untidy thing. It has tremendous bladed leaves that hang down, five or six feet long, looking much like swords of the Samurai. These grow ragged and rusty after a time, and when finally too dry for anything else are used for thatching the roofs, or lining the walls of native huts. Meantime a serpentine shoot puts out from

the upper part of the trunk, which eventually bears a bunch of bananas of a vivid and arsenical green. This shoot presents at the outset only a rudimentary bud, but later scales develop which turn into upward-pointing flowers. The bud remains and closes its career as a huge red blossom. The upward-pointing flowers become bananas, and they will probably number about one hundred and fifty to the bunch. The orthodox tree bears but one bunch a year; but when you have thousands and millions of these trees, all under scientific cultivation, as the big fruit-growers do, you can easily see what a tidy little business it may become. Especially so if you can control both ends — the buying and the selling — after the modern manner of large commercial organizations.

Naturally the growth of the business has brought with it the scientific development of banana culture. The local manager, to whom I was early introduced and whom I may refer to occasionally as K., took me through a few of the orchards nearest to Kingston within a day or two of my advent and explained some of the difficulties encountered. The banana is not free from pests and diseases, which have to be sprayed for as well as prayed against. A genuine hurricane — happily not of frequent occurrence — will certainly lay flat every banana tree in its path;

but I believe they meet this in part by inclining the trees in the direction from which such winds may be expected.

In the big farms — which go locally by the unlovely name of “pens,” by the way — systematic irrigation is practiced. Hurricane damage is of less moment in banana groves than in cocoanut forests because the banana is a quick-growing plant and can be propagated rapidly from cuttings; whereas a cocoanut palm takes a score of years to become fruitful and therefore has to be insured — for which purpose you discover that the cocoanut-trees, like the hairs of your head, are all numbered.

I have never yet found any one who could tell me truly the difference between a banana and a plantain, although many have tried. A number of rules for distinguishing the two fruits are offered, all of them, I judge, lies. One will assert that bananas grow pointing upward, and plantains pointing down — and lo, you will find the plantains, like their more aristocratic neighbors, looking aloft! I have come to believe, speaking subject to correction, that a plantain is nothing more than a coarser brand of banana, larger in size, less delicate in flavor, and growing in smaller clusters. Baked plantain is an inevitable factor in all island meals, much as potatoes are at home. It is more palatable than the yam, also in-

evitable, which in unskillful hands has all the inspiring flavor of a pine board.

I discover in the books the statement that the banana does not grow wild — yet I find this hard to believe since it must have started wild somewhere. It may have been in India. Theophrastus somewhere refers to a mysterious Indian fruit which he called *Musa sapientium* — the Muse of the Wise — and science without too much warrant has adopted the idea that this refers to the banana of old. It is an extremely good food, whether for the wise or not, although less in food-value, I am told, than an equal weight of potato. Possibly you will appreciate your next banana more for knowing that it is of the *Scitamineæ* family. Possibly not.

It should be added for completeness that the usual height of a banana-tree is from fifteen to forty feet, the mean between those extremes being a fair statement of the case usually met. A ride through interminable groves of them does not greatly please the eye, but probably produces a pleasurable sensation in the region of the owner's pocketbook. I was informed (1920) that the price of an ordinary bunch of bananas on the tree was about seventy-five cents. They cost slightly more than that, as you may have noticed, when delivered over the counter at home; but it has cost some one a pretty penny to harvest,

refrigerate, ripen, and store them in the interval, and naturally one also expects a profit on the total investment.

Bananas are always picked green. If ripened on the tree they acquire a woody flavor and are spoiled. The Jamaican usually ripens his in a barrel, and those that are thus matured near the spot of origin certainly do taste better than those freighted to a distance.

K. took me through a number of the plantations — chiefly banana “pens” — in each of which there was a little village for the workmen, a little school, and probably also a tiny church. There were also sections devoted to cocoanut, cocoa, sugar cane, and what-not, but the banana was the chief. I discovered to my reassurance that “copra,” which I had vaguely guessed was a noisome snake, was really nothing but dried cocoanut after the essential oil has been expressed. The oil you will discover is increasingly in demand owing to its manifold uses and to its power of keeping indefinitely without deterioration. There are no snakes worth speaking of in Jamaica — although there are mongooses (possibly I mean mongeese?) and occasional ticks. The latter one may avoid by keeping away from long grass and from places frequented by cattle. I have never seen a Jamaica tick, but it was the thing about which I

heard most before going to the island. If you get one under the skin, they say the proper course is to anoint the place with kerosene — in response to which unguent the tick politely backs out of your presence. Otherwise if you attempt to deal harshly with him he leaves his head behind and makes you trouble.

Not much can be said for the rides immediately around Kingston from the scenic standpoint. The mountains lie farther back, and the foreground is a gently undulating plain traversed by roads which are both dusty and moderately rough. Nevertheless there are one or two things to see and marvel at — such, for instance, as the mammoth tree still called “Tom Cringle’s Tree,” which stands hard by the Spanish Town road. In appearance, and judging by its girth and height, it might as well have been Noah’s. It is indescribably prodigious, and its trunk is fantastic with its huge folds of bark and its flying buttresses standing out all around as if to shore it up. It is a cottonwood; and such trees are not uncommon in the island, although seldom of this commanding size and obvious age. There is one nearly as notable at St. Ann, between the mammoth roots of which some ancient seafaring worthy caused his tomb to be constructed. The negroes prefer these trees, I think, as the material for their dugout canoes.

That there is any particular reason for calling this "Tom Cringle's Tree" I do not know. It is not probable that he was hanged from it. But it is certain that he wrote a book — a much better book than this — called "Tom Cringle's Log" describing his tropical voyages, which is still read by the curious and widely extolled by such as know it.

CHAPTER XVI

THE ISLE OF SPRINGS

SINCE so much has been said of the minor difficulties attending an actual advent in the island of Jamaica it is no doubt well to turn at once to a brief consideration of the island itself. It is, as has been remarked elsewhere, a sort of errant brother of the Antilles, which has strayed out of the otherwise fairly regular chain of the archipelago and taken up a position in the midst of the Caribbean.

It is an island of much the same size as Porto Rico, lying ninety miles south of the southern end of Cuba, and therefore about halfway between Porto Rico and the Central American coast. "About the size of Porto Rico" means that it is something short of one hundred and forty miles long, and not far from fifty miles wide.

Lying perhaps eighteen degrees north of the Equator, it is naturally a warm spot; but as the thoughtful provisions of Nature have arranged a fairly constant trade wind, it is a very tolerable sort of heat. The mendacious official records which deal with the insular temperatures ask you to be-

lieve that the "maximum for ten years at Kingston has averaged 87.7° F." Maybe it has, but it feels more like ninety-five degrees when you are there. In the uplands the thermometer hardly varies at all throughout the year, and there is one place where they say it moves up and down through a range of only nine degrees. I believe this. I am also ready to believe that it makes little difference what time of year you go there — although I met the vice-consul's wife one day, and she said that in June it was a great deal hotter than it was at Christmas, just as at home. She seemed quite serious about it because she had to be there usually throughout the summer.

It rains in Jamaica. It rains more in some places than in others. For instance up in the high mountains — which are about as high as Mount Washington — it averages a rainfall yearly of something around one hundred inches. Down in Kingston, the most nearly rainless spot, it manages to pile up forty-four inches in a year — which is n't far from our normal hereabouts, I think. While I was in Kingston it rained a good share of the whole year's supply, and it did it all in one afternoon, at that. In fact, in about two hours of that afternoon. These tropical downpours are the real thing when they happen.



NATIVE HUT NEAR KINGSTON



Now, Jamaica represents, I suppose, a volcanic upheaval in the midst of the sea. In consequence it has a very fertile soil; and equally it boasts abundant hot springs and frequent earthquakes. We had an earthquake the first night we were there. Katrina said there must be somebody under her bed. I had felt the same way about it, but had just wit enough to say it was probably an earthquake, and go to sleep again. It was only a little quake, of what they call locally the "up-and-down" variety. These do no harm, as a rule. The lateral kind, when they occur, manage to upset things very generally. It is about eighteen years since the last big one, which mussed up Kingston as a whole and precipitated the unsavory Sweatenham incident, of which more anon.

The other natural drawback is the West Indian hurricane, of which they get only a few bad specimens during a decade and chiefly in the autumn months, to the serious damage of the banana and cocoanut trees.

But if you bar earthquakes, hurricanes, and torrential showers, the land has no drawbacks at all. There are no poisonous reptiles or insects. I have not heard that it sports the tarantula. Things will grow of their own accord. If you set out a banana shoot, it springs up and bears you a fine bunch of

bananas in about ten months. You don't need any heavy clothes. A palmleaf fan and an umbrella would suffice.

The island is really a mountain that breaks the surface of the ocean and soars up into the sky about seven thousand feet at the topmost point. It has its lower points, by use of which the excellent roads and the poor local railroad manage to get across the island. It has its intervalles and valleys — some of them very curious ones. Made as it is of a limestone which is fairly soluble in water, and being copiously rained upon, the surface of the land has been eaten into enormous potholes which they call "cockpits" — sometimes of enormous depth. The whole place is alive with springs — and I believe the name Jamaica is Indian for "Isle of Springs." There are loads of brawling rivers, navigable only in a few cases by bamboo rafts. And the rivers have an uncomfortable way of disappearing in the ground only to reappear somewhere else, very likely on the other side of a hill.

The island is better wooded than Porto Rico, and yet considering its location in about the same latitude, the trees are surprisingly different. The royal palm is n't native in Jamaica at all — but there is an abundance of the other varieties and they have the pleasant tropical habit of growing right down

to the edge of the sea, very much as if they thought it a mere lake, or river. The cocoanut-palm is everywhere. So is the handsome pimento-tree, which is another name for allspice. The books say this tree grows nowhere else — at least not naturally. There are, of course, bananas till you can't rest. Also logwood, mango, breadfruit, oranges, and acacias. But you miss the flamboyant poincianas of Porto Rico with their flaming color, save when you venture into such arboretums as the Hope Gardens near Kingston, or the huge Castleton preserve nineteen miles out, in the heart of the great mountain range which cuts the island in twain running east and west. But you will hardly see a hill so precipitous that it is n't cultivated right up to its top — sometimes to your amazement because it looks as if nobody but a mountain goat could get up there. Only about 70,000,000 acres are devoted to bananas — a mere bagatelle! I don't find any record of how many cocoanut acres there are, but I think they told me that something like 30,000,000 cocoanuts were shipped out last year. As you ride around you come to appreciate the cocoanut. It grows in clusters, at the top of a palm that looks like a rather dilapidated feather-duster we once had to dust off the carriages when I was a boy at home.

It is a sin to steal a cocoanut. It is so much of a sin that any negro caught at it will be sent off to jail for a sizable term. This probably has to be done in order to impress the native with the valid distinctions between Meum and Tuum — twin gods for whom he would otherwise have small reverence. But if you can get a native to shin up a tree and gather you a lawful cocoanut, it is worth seeing done; and if it is a green cocoanut, he will chip off the top and give you a drink that reconciles you to thirst in order to repeat the dose. Cocoanut water is a somewhat overrated beverage in my judgment — it certainly does not compare for seductiveness with the planter's punch; but it is mildly sweet, always cool, and very refreshing in its ladylike way.

The cocoanut-palms are all numbered, when cultivated. This, they told us, is for insurance purposes. The insurance is against the hurricanes, which, when they come, usually bend these great trees like whiplashes and generally lay them flat. Inasmuch as it takes cocoanut-trees about as long as it takes a human being to arrive at the age of reproductiveness, it is no light matter to lose a lot of them in a storm.

Jamaica dawned on the consciousness of civilization about the time of Columbus, of course. He is

supposed to have touched there on one of his voyages, as he is alleged to have touched at about every island in the Antilles. The Spaniards naturally took over the place, and their actual occupation began in 1509. They only lasted until 1665, however, when a British admiral sailed in and captured the island. Even during their one hundred and fifty years the Spaniards had n't bothered much about it, being concerned for gold of which Jamaica offered none. There were only three thousand inhabitants there when the English took it. At the present time it has about a million people — five sixths of them colored and virtually devoid of any voice whatever in the government. Some Bolshevik will probably start them to thinking they ought to vote — which will be a pity because they are as happy as clams now, and they won't be then. Why can't Bolsheviks let happy people alone?

Spanish traces are very few. Montego Bay, a remote resort, is a name derived from Manteca Bay; and *manteca* is Spanish for butter, or lard. I forget just why they called it that, but there was a reason. "Bog Walk," which is n't at all what its name suggests, is derived from Boca del Agua (Mouth of the River), but that fact bothers no one at all. Spanish Town, a hamlet some fifteen miles out of Kingston, is n't Spanish any more.

In the course of past centuries the island was flooded with slaves, from whom spring the present vast negro population. They were emancipated in 1834: so you see the British beat us to it; and, furthermore, the owners of the slaves were compensated for the "property" they lost — which also surpassed our method in some respects. But the landlords were none the less disgusted and got out of the island in huge numbers, so that it has taken a long time to get business rehabilitated. It's fine now, though.

By the way, Canon Ripley of the First Parish Church told me this yarn: The Dutch originally occupied Manhattan Island and the British had great South American possessions in Guiana. Being alert for the main chance, some British statesmen offered to swap a section of Guiana for the island on which then stood Nieuw Amsterdam. The Dutch, being stolidly unforseeing, said it was a go — and thus potential New York passed into British hands in exchange for Dutch Guiana. The Englishmen living in Guiana chose not to live under Dutch control and emigrated to Jamaica, which was already a British possession. "Therefore," said the canon with a twinkle, "we are always glad to see people from New York."

Even now, I take it, the British do not greatly

esteem Jamaica. It has its most important trade relations with America, which takes about sixty per cent of its products, leaving less than thirty per cent in actuality to be swallowed by Britain after other traders have taken what they want. Americans have moved in and preëmpted the land — largely in the form of plantations devoted to the United Fruit Company. The British who used to come out to Jamaica for the winter have discovered that this Americanization has hit the hotels — the big ones naturally charge American prices; and as a result there is wailing because it costs so much to winter in the warmth. There is need of some cheaper hotels, and a few are springing up, even in the environs of Kingston, as one result of the close of the war.

Calamitous visitations of quake and whirlwind have had their effect on the island. Port Royal, the original chief port — which lay at the end of the long sand spit which makes the huge harbor of modern Kingston — was “swallowed up” in a quake in 1692. In reality it only slid off into the sea, being built on a bit of sand which had stuck to the basic rocks, but which was dislodged when the earth began to heave. In 1712 and again in 1722 tornadoes swept the bulk of the Port Royal plantations flat and a great fire in 1815 obliterated what was left of the former capital on the point.

The last great hurricane was in 1903, and the last big quake in 1907 — the one that destroyed Kingston and led to the unsavory interlude of the Sweatenham incident before referred to. Sweatenham was the royal governor.

Immediately after the quake, being on a cruise in that vicinity and learning that there was trouble ashore, a gallant Yankee admiral with his squadron and a force of marines hurried into Kingston and sought to render first aid. Without waiting for any red tape he landed his marines, helped put out the fire which was raging, undertook to assist the local police, put down a rebellion among the prisoners in the penitentiary, and in various ways sought to be neighborly and helpful — assuming, of course, that the governor would be very glad to have assistance.

The governor proved not to be grateful at all. His thanks took the form of an order to the admiral to take his marines out of the island forthwith and keep them out. He backed this with a letter, which I think for sheer studied insolence, beats anything I ever read in official correspondence. The people of Kingston protested and begged the admiral not to go. He said he simply could n't stay, after being ordered out by the authorities, and went.

But the matter did not end there. It was brought to the attention of the British Foreign Office, which

demanded an immediate explanation and apology from Sweatenham. He filed a perfunctory apology to Admiral Davis — and resigned. His resignation was accepted. He is still living in Jamaica — which must take rather a thick skin; but you will find opinion divided concerning him, and some, especially of British allegiance, still insist that he was a much-maligned man.

I met a lady who had been in Kingston on the fearful night of that earthquake. She and her father were staying at the old Myrtle Bank Hotel and were in their rooms. Without warning the floors began to heave and the walls suddenly fell outward. Those who remained in the hotel were saved, because the partitions and floors held fast. Those who ran into the street were killed by the crashing of the walls. My friend and her father managed to climb down over the débris; and the father, an old sea-captain with a sailor's natural instinct said at once that they must make for the water. They ran down to the edge of the harbor, found a boat, and pulled out on the bosom of the deep — "Because," explained the captain, "this town is going to burn!" It did burn. The fire and the quake together destroyed one thousand lives and \$10,000,000 worth of property. Kingston still shows the scars.

It was next day when the American admiral with

his marines arrived and plunged unbidden into the work of helping the afflicted. What they did was no doubt needful, and without them it would not have been done so promptly. But the governor and the more testy brand of British resident resented the possibility that these interlopers "would say they had saved a situation," and for that scruple they ordered them out with not so much as a thank-you, but with what looked much more like a churlish rebuff. I suppose Sweatenham is only waiting to see another quake and find out what happens next time!

Jamaica sent over fifteen thousand men to the Great War. There are naturally also troops quartered in the island, although you see nothing of them. The white soldiers are stationed at an impossible-looking town on the tip of a mountain which you can see from Kingston — a town which you can motor up to if your nerve is good, although those who have tried it usually say that they would not make the trip again for a million dollars. The climate up there is better for white men than that of the plains, and this probably compensates for the dangers of the jaunt. Besides, soldiers ought to be brave men, anyhow, and the journey up to Newcastle is calculated to make any one brave if the tales are true. The negro troops live happily in a camp down below, which is quite easy of access.

Katrina, in her capacity of censor, says she thinks I have not been sufficiently enthusiastic about Kingston. I don't talk as if I wanted to go back there. Bless you, if that's the way it sounds I am sorry. All I mean to imply is that of all the places I saw in Jamaica, Kingston struck me as the least delightful, either for situation or for climate. But when you come to that, it is a matter of degrees of delight. All Jamaica is good, but some parts are better than others — to paraphrase the Kentuckian's verdict on whiskey of which you have heard.

CHAPTER XVII

A JAMAICAN MOTOR FLIGHT

WHEN you are in Jamaica it is the thing to do what the Jamaicans don't do — to wit, hire a motor. The reason the Jamaicans do not do this is largely the expense.

Gasoline at a dollar the gallon is not conducive to frequent joy-riding through the steep and curving grades of the mountain highways — which is a mercy. In fact you may drive all day and hardly meet two cars on the road. When you do, you will discover that although the rule is to “meet to the left and pass on the right,” the drivers ordinarily hug the wrong side of the road and make both meeting and passing a source of abundant thrills.

Tradition says you should not hire a local native for your driver, because when the local native does get behind a wheel and has some one else to pay for the gas he cuts loose and becomes a speed-hound. But as you prospect around for a car in which to tour the island you will speedily discover that none but local drivers of a dusky hue are to be had. You therefore insist upon being given a careful one — and you find that they are all (on their own tell) the

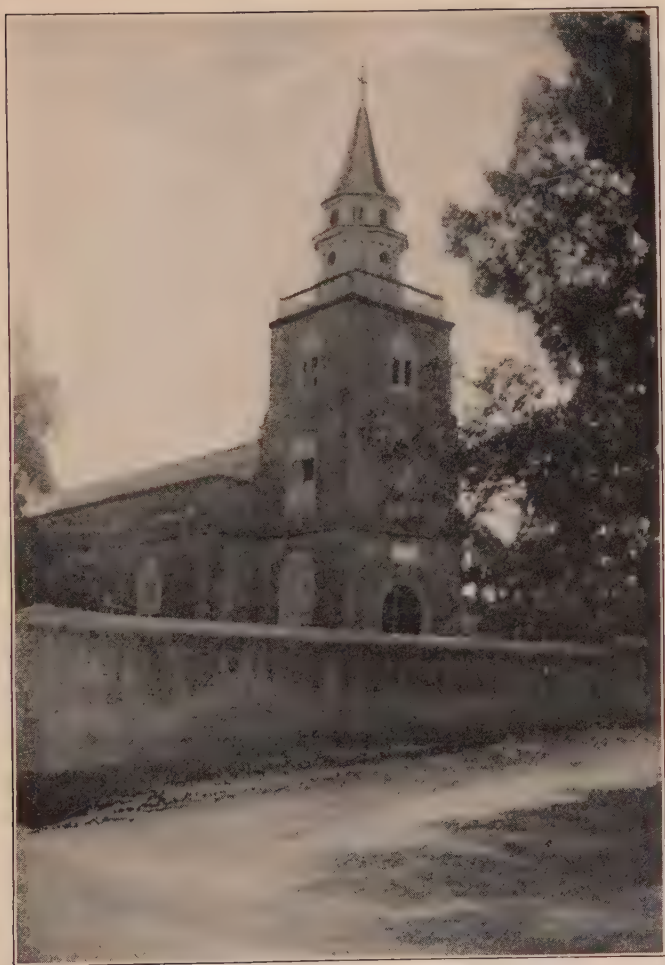
most careful drivers known to motordom. It is possible to make an arrangement with a genial person of Celtic extraction who operates a garage across the way from the Myrtle Bank Hotel, for any number of days you choose, at a stipulated mileage rate, and including board for chauffeur, purchase of gasoline, etc., which is not on the whole ruinous. Which done, you await the day of departure, commending your soul to Heaven, and your estate to your heirs, executors, administrators, and assigns.

I stipulated for a Buick, because I thought if anything happened to the driver I could manage to navigate the craft myself. It turned out that I did n't need to; but you never can tell. The machine appeared in the *porte cochère* promptly at nine in the morning, as agreed; and barring a certain flavor of mild decay due to its early vintage it looked amply sufficient for Katrina and me. A nonchalant young man, of the *café au lait* complexion common in those parts, sat at the wheel — a soft-eyed, soft-spoken youth who said that I might, if I liked, call him Millard. I called him that for an hour or two. Thereafter he was referred to in the family circle as "Young Nuisance." He liked to drive, and he knew how to hand, reef, and steer passably — but not much more. His delight was in the open cut-out, and it was only by an occasional admonitory punch

in the back that I got him to close the muffler on level stretches or in going down hill. On the up-grade he opened her wide, and the snort of the exhaust was to his ear as delectable as the music of the spheres. He insisted that this was necessary.

He revealed also an artistic temperament in the use of the horn. On dangerous corners he omitted to sound it, apparently being more interested in getting around the curve. But on the open road where one could see ahead for a mile or two he waked the echoes of the glen with warning toots, until Katrina and I were reduced to something approaching an apoplectic rage. All these peculiarities we learned before we had made Spanish Town — a hamlet lying a dozen miles or less from the capital city.

Spanish Town is notable chiefly for its narrow streets with their quaint houses, a huge penitentiary, and a very old church. The huddled houses appear to remind every American visitor of some town at home — all different. One lady told me it was like Williamsburg. To me it recalled Provincetown and Marblehead with a dash of Gloucester. As for the old cathedral, now of course Church-of-England, it was a delight. A moss-grown old negro showed us over it, explained the points of interest, pointed out the ancient tombs, accepted the customary gratuity, and bowed us out. The church was the first thing in



OLD CATHEDRAL AT SPANISH TOWN, JAMAICA

all Jamaica, aside from the everlasting hills, that had seemed at all permanent.

Thence we proceeded many parasangs westward, passing on the way through Bushy Park where the dairy is, and pushed on toward the remote mountain hamlet of Mandeville. The road which had been dusty and rough began to improve. We crossed and recrossed the primitive railroad, rumbled through towns, quaintly named May Pen and Porus, and finally began to climb. The dust of Kingston was forgotten. The excessive heat of summer gave place to the balmy airs of jocund May. It had rained recently and the dust was washed from the wayside trees. Ever and anon stalwart negresses marched by, with that stately carriage acquired by the bearing of burdens on the head. Never have I seen more queenly figures than these wayside women — straight as arrows, sedate in movement, majestic in every way — often very handsome in the negroid style. From such as bore deckloads of fruit we bought sustenance for a song, which we shared with Young Nuisance — i.e., bananas and star apples. The latter we prized chiefly for their decorative quality. As fruit, the star apple is n't much. If you cut it equatorially, you can see the inward star which gives it the name. If you cut it longitudinally you avoid trouble with the seeds. Its taste is sickish sweet, and

a gelatinous semi-fluid in its midst makes it otherwise than appetizing to the untutored. But the bananas and the tangerines, which you can get almost anywhere as you ride along, are food for the gods in very truth.

I soon learned by inquiry, what I had shrewdly suspected from the first, that Young Nuisance was n't a very experienced driver in the matter of insular geography. In common with most chauffeurs he lacked the so-called "bump of locality." Driving around Kingston was one thing, but a voyage of discovery to quarters sixty or one hundred miles remote was something else again. Young Nuisance was not much over sixteen. He claimed that he had been to Mandeville within living memory, but I noticed he had to inquire the road. Therefore, when I probed him and found that he had no conception of how to get from there to Moneague, where we proposed to spend the night, my heart took a trip to the bottom of my shoes. I did n't know the way myself, and it was a long ride at best through mountains many and great. Young Nuisance was sure of only one thing — and that was that it "could n't be done."

Of course the right thing to do was to stay in Mandeville — which course was impossible only because there was no room for us in the inn. Owing

to the American prices prevailing in Kingston, economical Britishers in great number had hied themselves to the hills from whence cometh low-priced and very admirable accommodation. Mandeville, which has three small hotels at reasonable rates and which boasts a most delightful climate of perpetual spring, was full to overflowing. We might lunch—but remain we could not. And Moneague lay seventy good miles away, through a devious country of which Young Nuisance was as ignorant as was I.

However, the very agreeable and very blond Englishman who kept the Mandeville Hotel took a map and labored to show me the way. He said that if my driver was of reasonable intelligence —

“Say no more,” said I hastily. “He is n’t.”

So he and I husked out the route together and I noted it on my cuff. Meanwhile Young Nuisance drove merrily away in quest of his food, disclaiming any need of procuring gas for the car. For this we had abundant reason to curse him later, because no one in Jamaica ever neglects a chance to refill his fuel tanks, if he be wise. There’s no certainty that you’ll find any gas at the next town. It is very unlikely that you will. Therefore you buy whatever you can get as you go along, whether in real need of it or not. The time will come when you are glad you did it.

We lunched in great comfort at Mandeville, but not over-well. The hotel was a quaint, rambling affair, all ups and downs, with huge verandas on which all the bedrooms opened. I think I should enjoy staying there some day. The village itself was no less quaint, and spread itself over a little hollow in the midst of towering hills. A vast courthouse indicated that law and order were insisted upon. A decidedly knowing-looking hospital argued for the care of public health. But the great charm was of tropic nature all around — nature at its level best.

Map in hand, and with copious notes under my eye as sailing master solely responsible for passengers and crew, we whirled away in the early afternoon. Millard was still pretty sure we should never make Moneague. He knew of the place, it seemed, but to his mind it lay at the antipodes and on a quite different road. Jockeying along through mountain ranges, always up and then ever down again, wasting precious gas on interminable stretches of low-gear, and apparently as far as ever from the goal, told on his perturbed spirit. The horn providentially gave out, owing to a broken wire. Even the cut-out lost its charm. We pounded painfully through a list of unknown and unknowable villages situated at vast intervals. It seemed that Katrina

really enjoyed the ride. She was n't on the bridge, so to speak, and her delight over the grandeur of mountain and verdure was perpetually ebullient. It was indeed magnificent, when one could give one's mind to it. The mountains of the island are both high and bold. They are wooded almost to their tops with tropic trees. The road winds in sweeping curves over spurs and down through cavernous vales. Everywhere was a smiling greenery, and overhead a blue sky — save where to my apprehensive view a gathering of cloud presaged another torrential shower for our later discomfiture. On the trees hung innumerable orchids. On no account go to Jamaica without doing the trip from Mandeville northward to Brownstown, and thence onward to St. Ann, or to Moneague. It is worth the journey down to the island, if you do naught else. Even I, preoccupied with the work of pathfinding, could see the beauty of the ride.

On the way you climb out of one watershed and into another. As that in turn proves profitless you climb once more and descend to a brawling river which gives a practicable route to the northern coast. Once we got over the second rise Young Nuisance brightened. "Here, sah! I been here befo'. Here's where I bought some gas!" I forget the name of the hamlet; but it was a beautiful spot,

notable for much else besides the fact that here on some previous occasion Millard had refilled his depleted tanks. He lost all consciousness of the road again shortly after, but by dint of keeping in the way directed we made Brownstown late in the afternoon and made diligent inquiry as to directions thence. They said it was all right. Just keep on going. Millard, who was beginning to appreciate the gas problem, inquired also for fuel. They said there was n't any in town. Oh, well! who cared?

We knew too much to ask for the road to Mon-eague. You might as well inquire the road to Babylon, or Tewksbury. The native knows the name of the next town, perhaps, but beyond that he has n't usually heard. However, the Blond Man of Mandeville had given me a choice list of odd burgs along the way, including such peculiar spots as Excellent Town and Good Design. We whirled away around a corner and into more mountains, just as the rain which had hung off all the afternoon began to fall.

I think even Katrina was depressed by now. The road did n't look as if it could be the right one. It had ribbons of grass down its midst and certainly did n't look like a main highway. Eventually we got up into the clouds and wandered along interminably on a shelf of the mountain. A young donkey got ahead of us and ran as fast as he could go, unable

to find any breach in the wall of green along the roadside through which to escape. But in an hour or so we came to a tiny collection of houses — a village of sorts — and inquired of the local grocery, “licensed to sell brandy, gin, and agricultural implements,” what place this might be.

“Dis here town, sah, am Bamboo.”

Ah, good! We were all right after all.

“This the way to Claremont?”

“Yassah. Claremont eight mile, Moneague thirteen!”

Now that was something like! Katrina and I became gay again. So also did Young Nuisance — who had repaired his horn and woke the echoes afresh. The rain ceased. The waning sun cast a benediction over a washed and wakened nature. So on we sped through hills of an ever-increasing stupendousness, racing against the advancing dusk. At last it was down, down, down, and then around a long curve toward a hillock, set like the boss of an inverted shield, the top of which was crowned with our desired haven. It was the Moneague Hotel; and the proprietor announced that he was expecting us. Our good friend in Kingston, Mr. K., had been as good as his word. He had telegraphed, and we were safe.

Young Nuisance proclaimed that he had half a

tank left. He said he would surely refill it during the night.

I had at Moneague my first real night's sleep since reaching the tropics. It was deathly still up there. No roosters woke the midnight. No quarreling natives disturbed the early dawn. It was even cold enough for one blanket. Twelve hours was my record that night; and the cares that had infested the day did the proper and traditional thing. They folded their tents like the Arabs and silently stole away.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE NORTH COAST

YOUNG NUISANCE, otherwise Millard, presented himself on the following morning — a fine dewy morning in March, at the portals of the Hotel Moneague.

He regretted to report one flat tire, which he engaged to repair in the course of an hour. Also he regretted to state that there was no gasoline to be had in that upland resort. He insisted, however, that there was still enough fuel in the tanks to get us to the town of St. Ann's Bay, at which point he was positive we could refill.

I was still new in Jamaica, and believed.

Therefore we sat down to contemplate the undulations of a near-by mountain range. A bright forenoon sun dispelled the coolness of the mountain morning. There could be no need of haste, for St. Ann lay only about twenty miles away — and that distance, especially when it is nearly all downhill, requires but little time and little "gas." In fact it is more a matter of brake-linings than anything else, and less a problem of locomotion than of holding back.

I would say a good word for Moneague in passing. I suspect that there is a town of that name, although I have not seen it. There is certainly a very eligible, if somewhat primitive, hostelry remote from the actual village on the top of a low and conical hill, where they "do you very well" as the British misleadingly put it, at a very moderate charge. If you ever go to Jamaica and get tired — as you will — of the heat and dust of Kingston, get thee to Moneague and there abide! You will find it pleasantly warm by day and deliciously cool o' nights. You will be simply but sufficiently fed. You will not be rained upon overmuch. You will be within, say, fifteen miles of the northern coasts, which can be reached by a most charming road. And you can take a run down there to bathe and come back easily for lunch. There is no railroad within a dozen miles.

Young Nuisance came to time as per agreement in due course, and after preliminary inquiries designed to eke out his infantile ignorance of local geography, we took the road — coasting gently down a series of sweeping curves and mounting swiftly an adjacent ridge — from whence the descent, like that to Aver-nus, was said to be facile. It was even so. As we drew near the coast the road took a headlong plunge of three miles or thereabouts, down and ever downward, through caverns seemingly measureless to

man, the sides of which were covered with ferns of most stupendous size and endless variety. Not the least interesting of Jamaican flora are the varieties of fern. They embrace innumerable species. Your driver, whatever else he may not know, is anxious to show you his knowledge of such things as these.

"See, Missy! Silver fern! Wait! I get him for yo'." And forthwith he jams on his emergency brake, vanishes over the side, and disappears in the undergrowth. Shortly he emerges with a few fern leaves, which you lay on the back of your hand and then administer a smart blow. Behold! An exact reproduction of every frond remains outlined in silver on your sunburned flesh. Or maybe in gold, if it's a gold fern. And as for sensitive plant — what they call locally "'Shamed of you" — it is everywhere. Touch it and it shivers and shrivels into itself, for all the world as if alive and very much frightened, thus to remain for about ten minutes by the watch. Then it plucks up heart and opens again.

The drive down to the sea, at a place still bearing the name of Ochos Rios (Eight Rivers) for some reason which we did not discover, is known somewhat unpoetically as the "Fern Gully Ride." I never fancied the word "gully." To me, it means a bleak and stony ravine, quite different from this

opulent fern-clad abyss, from the bottom of which we could hardly see the sun.

We ground our way down through the verdant gloom of that cleft in the primordial rocks, pausing prudently after a time to let the brakes cool sufficiently to save them, and always exclaiming at the beauty of the environment, which was notable alike for its ferns, its depth of shadow, and its precipitous walls which vanished somewhere above into an unguessed heaven of tropical trees.

Then almost without warning we emerged from the gulf of ferns, and lo, there was the sea beating in long, regular rollers on the palm-clad beach. A brawling stream, doubtless one of the eight, dashed out of the jungle and with one exulting, joyous bound leaped into the arms of Ocean. East and west under the palms stretched the white road that circles the island. Inland, the cliffs rose boldly.

You will be enchanted with the view, if you go thither, and especially with the confiding way in which the palm-trees come right down to the water's edge, like unto the trees of Chargogagog-manchaugagogchaubunagungamaug. They act as if it was n't the ocean at all, but a river. And yet there come occasional breakers that dash a salty foam clear over the road.

We turned westward, questing St. Ann. On so

bold a shore the highway winds and winds, always close to the water, but traversing deep coves and making out to the very end of narrow capes. Millard revealed a propensity to speed and had to be admonished by Katrina, whose sunshade played a gentle tattoo on his youthful shoulders. You see you might meet another car on those narrow curves — or more likely a big truck loaded with the omnipresent banana — or more probably still, the native cart, dawdling on the wrong side of the way, may greet you as you whirl into the midst of a squawking and panicky populace. Native drivers have to be firmly and persistently quelled — and at this form of pastime we have learned to be most expert. Even then you have solved only half the problem — for it is of little avail to be careful yourself if the other fellow happens not to be careful too, and those roads are fearsomely crooked and terribly strait and narrow.

Dun's River — sometimes called Dungeon River — pours likewise out of a depth of jungle, roars under the road, and then drops a sheer thirty feet to a pleasantly shaded beach. Here is the bather's paradise, if you don't mind dressing and undressing for the plunge in a somewhat inadequate shelter of banana-leaved huts. They say it is most glorious to wash in the warm sea and then rinse off under

the cool natural shower bath of the falls. But the fall of Dun's River is a small affair contrasted with a cascade a mile or two farther on, where the greatest of all the island cataracts is to be seen at a small expenditure of time. Millard was n't going to let us see that one — being impressed unduly by the fact that for the privilege of turning aside into a private road the guardian holds you up for a shilling apiece. It is worth the fee, however, so do not miss it. You drive for a short distance on the private way through a dense growth, toward a point where can be heard the voice of many waters. Then you descend and make your way on foot to the base of a really stupendous cascade which comes thundering out of the mountains and dashing and splashing, and whirling and swirling, and lunging and plunging — you know how the water comes down at Lodore? Well, it does that same way here. If Katrina, with her zeal for sight-seeing and her propensity for keeping one eye on the guide-books, had not insisted, I am afraid we should have been whisked past Roaring River Fall and landed unduly early in St. Ann. As it was we parked the disgruntled Millard under a cocoanut-palm and clambered over the rocks to the base of this miniature Niagara, comparing it not unfavorably with the Falls of Montmorency just below Quebec.

After which, being seated, we allowed Young Nuisance to conduct us at full speed to St. Ann — drawing up with a grand flourish, such as stage-drivers love the world over, before the hospitable stairways that lead up to the Hotel Osborne. It was the hour sacred to lunch, and the gasoline had, indeed, endured to get us there — but not much more. Millard drove away in hopeful quest of some: we to a shaded veranda and to the prospect of a lazy afternoon, in which a view over white roofs to a sea of most incredible blues figured as the chief excitement.

Apart from the fact that there's nothing whatever to do at St. Ann, it's a delightful place in which to be. The town is not large, but it is neat. It lies on a slope just above the bay, which latter is protected to east and west by jutting headlands. It is a tiny harbor suitable only for small boats. The bathing would be excellent if there were any facilities — but there are none. The popular pastime at St. Ann is that celebrated by the poet, Whitman, of loafing and inviting your soul. One addicted to eating the lotus must find it a delightful spot. You simply sit in the shade and watch indolent negresses puffing by with their burdens on their heads and a stubby clay pipe of obvious antiquity held between ivory teeth. The native women, of

course, are inveterate smokers and are by no means confined to pipes. A black cigar is not infrequently preferred — and while I think of it, the Jamaica cigars are very far from being half bad. They are not expensive, but are very tolerable in quality without approaching the incomparable product of Cuba. Jamaica seems never to have made any effort to boom the tobacco trade, being more alive to the virtues of bananas and cocoanuts. The citrus fruits suffer a partial neglect, also, when industry might easily make of the Jamaica tangerine with its ill-fitting coat a coveted luxury beyond seas. On the whole it seems to me an island of neglected opportunities — now partly recognized by the United Fruit people, but still numerous available for further exploitation.

The Osborne House, kept by an industrious woman with sundry masculine assistants, turned out to be immaculately clean and tidy. It was also evidently popular. Owing to the lack of local amusements its trade is naturally transient, apart from sundry English guests who hie themselves thither chiefly because it is both a quiet spot and a reasonable. It was for the moment enlivened, aside from our humble selves, by a strolling troupe of movie photographers in quest of “nature studies” for an “educational” film corporation in the

States. These gentry, after a wild time in getting across from Cuba by an unfrequented line, found life admittedly dull. There is small excitement in taking moving pictures of tropical trees after you have been filming scenarios for Douglas Fairbanks, Ethel Barrymore, Nazimova, *et id om*.

The evening's conversation turned on the idiosyncrasies and peculiarities of movie stars, their fabulous salaries, their probable length of days as public favorites, and so on. Mary Pickford's annual income was casually estimated at "about two million — but what does that get her? The Government takes 'most all of it!"

The movie troupe was a unit in expressing its admiration for that national institution, the planters' punch; but apart from that it preferred New York and Los Angeles for steady diet. It was bound hence for Montego Bay.

"Have you any gasoline?" I inquired.

"No — not very much. But we'll take a chance. If we get stuck we'll just camp out and register 'hope,' I guess. The Lord will provide."

I suspect that must be what they did, for I found after lunch how serious was the gasoline question. There was a local famine. Young Nuisance came back to the hotel with a very long face, announcing that not one drop was to be had for any consider-

ation in the purlieus of St. Ann. He had only a gallon or so remaining, and our next jump was one of seventy-five miles. What was he to do?

I said I did n't know. In short, it was n't up to me — but all the time I knew it was.

Inquiry developed the fact that the nearest railway station was Ewarton, some thirty miles away in the interior. If worst came to worst we could hire a wagon to drive us there and leave Young Nuisance to starve in the midst of plenty. I was minded to do this.

Then we thought of the United Fruit, that fairy godmother; so we squandered a half-gill of the precious fluid on a drive to the docks where stood the local office. Yes, they had gasoline — but only a little. They were n't allowed to sell it, even to themselves. It was for trucks, and so forth. At this point I produced credentials from the remote potentates of the company. The effect was magical. They would telephone Kingston and see if I might be supplied by special permit.

In the course of the afternoon a dusky messenger brought me a typewritten message which read like the eleventh-hour reprieve of the condemned. "Mr. M. can have gasoline to take him to Port Antonio or to any other part of the island. (Signed) K." We were saved!

It was here that I learned the important difference between a British and American gallon. Ours is smaller. But whichever it was, we filled the tank as full as it would go, paid the fee which was by no means inconsiderable, and offered humble and hearty thanks for the chance to do it. Thence back to the hotel to listen to a painstaking child in the next block practicing five-finger exercises and always ending with "The Happy Farmer," in the production of which masterpiece she made the same mistakes on each repetition.

Walking about the streets of St. Ann's Bay we came across many a friendly person of color, chiefly in the way of affable and solicitous mammies pulling on their T.D.'s and anxious to show their interest in the stranger within their gates.

"Good-mawnin', Mistress Missus!"

"Good-morning!"

"How is yo' health, Mistress Missus!"

"Very fair, thank you. And you?"

"Fine, Mistress Missus! An' how is yo' health, Massa?"

Such soft and melodious voices — and yet I cannot recall that I often heard singing. Perhaps because the Church of England does not encourage the singing of what we call "negro spirituals," or because the plantation ditty is an American product

exclusively, the Jamaican darky seems not to beguile his days with song. You do meet now and then a dusky troubadour on the road with his guitar — but you will be lucky if in addition to hearing him strum upon it you also hear him lift his voice. I heard negro chanteys when we were rafting on the river — but that is another story.

CHAPTER XIX

PORT ANTONIO

A LONG the northern coast of Jamaica, bending in and out with the indentations of the shore, runs a reasonably level and very excellent road connecting St. Ann's Bay with the eastern town of Port Antonio. To be sure, it is a narrow highway and very far from straight, so that one driving over it is in constant need of what the law school professors used to call "the degree of care which an ordinarily prudent man would exercise in the circumstances"; but it is a delightful journey to make in any case.

St. Ann has little to hold you long, as I believe I have remarked once before, aside from its pleasant situation and its very admirable little inn. Port Antonio, on the contrary, has allurements that might easily hold you forever. I am coming to that.

Plentifully supplied with petrol, Millard, our juvenile charioteer, was once more restored to the buoyant spirits consistent with his meager years and was promptly at the door on the morning of our departure. The day was fine, the Caribbean smiled, and the early northeast trade blew as gently

as a western zephyr in our faces as we took the road. It was a day to mark in the memory with a very white stone. The showers of the day before had laid the dust, and had washed from the wayside shrubs that coating of white which in most Jamaican highways somewhat dims the tropic splendors, save in seasons of heavy rain.

For many a mile the way led close to the beach — a beach broken by repeated low capes and forever lined with palms. To the landward side the cliffs rose steeply, rock below and riotous verdure above. We proceeded at a conservative pace past myriad coves where gushing rivers from the hills leaped from the low rocks into the sea. The multitudes of the countryside were coming in town to market, some in carts and some afoot with loads of fruit perched jauntily on their heads. To each and all we paid the passing tribute of a toot — for not only did Millard love his raucous horn; the natives also demanded this notice as an indication of their recognized presence.

I have discovered that although a Jamaican darky sees you coming and knows that you see him, he is none the less anxious to have you toot at him. If you do not, it seems to be felt to be a species of insult — or at best a gross social error.

“Whuffo’ you not blow yo’ hawn at me, Mars

Josh?" indignantly inquired a Port Antonio dame of my good friend B. one day. "Doan' I see you, an' doan' you see me? Whuffo' you not blow yo' hawn?"

Therefore Millard, mindful of insular etiquette, blew painstakingly on the open road at all and sundry — but swept silently around the narrow curves to the imminent danger of such as might be approaching unseen. Evidently our siren was not regarded by him as a warning signal, but as a sort of saluting apparatus, or stertorous equivalent to raising the hat.

Once we dashed around a corner full upon a truck loading bananas and were forced to an emergency stop as the better part of valor — since a five-year-old touring car is no match for a full-fledged army truck piled high with green fruit. Then, and then only, was the stolid calm of Millard broken. He leaned as haughtily as his sixteen years would allow from his seat and shouted, "Hey! Dis a fine place for you to be loadin' de banan'! My Gawd!" The truck crew grinned an ivory grin, obligingly pulled ahead half a length — and we were off once more in a whirl of mingled dust and gasoline.

One coast ride in Jamaica is as like unto another as one hand is to another hand. That is, although

all different, they tend to a certain uniformity of general feature. We began to pass through other minor northern ports, some redolent of the ancient Spanish days and others with more stupid British names, which, if traced, would probably turn out to be corruptions of the ancient Spanish. Then the highway left the sea and crossed a spur of mountain, only to descend to the water again at Annotta Bay, meeting there the railroad which had climbed over the main ridge between us and the Kingston side. Thence we proceeded many a level mile close to the ocean's marge, now and then sprayed by the breakers from the beach as the day's breeze increased in strength and piled the long rollers more and more vehemently on the yellow sands.

At last, well after noon, we coasted down a long hill and found before us the considerable town of Port Antonio, almost at the northeast corner of the island, with the long and curiously dark bulk of the famous Titchfield Hotel stretching itself along the top of the jutting spur of land that here makes out into the sea between twin harbors. A whisk through narrow streets, a mad dash up another slope, and we had arrived.

I find myself reluctant to undertake any description of Port Antonio, because it makes such a heavy demand upon the powers of expression. I



OLD CHURCH, ANNOTTA BAY, JAMAICA

have seen many a beautiful spot on this green earth, but seldom if ever have I seen one so beautiful, or so rare a combination of sea, sky, and summit. I can imagine nothing more soul-satisfying than the entrance by ship into the harbors of Port Antonio on a cloudless morning, when the wind is asleep and when the lofty mountains behind the city are free from cloud. It is a thousand pities that the exigencies of commerce have led to the abandonment of this as a port of call for the regular passenger ships of the United Fruit; for it is sure that such an arrangement as used to obtain would enhance the seductiveness of travel to Jamaica. Nevertheless it is only the special cruisers and the way-freighters that come in there now. The regular lines all go around to Kingston and leave you to find out Port Antonio by land.

The town itself is rather unattractive — not very large, almost entirely negroid, but situated in a setting that would redeem a hamlet far less ornate than this one actually is. Off to one side stands a venerable stone church on a little knoll. All around rise abrupt, conical hills, possibly five or six hundred feet in height, cultivated to their summits and usually crowned with villas that seem impossible of approach. Behind them tower the seven thousand feet of the old Blue Mountain. It is the para-

dise of tourists, and it has proved to be the popular spot for those who, wearying of bleak northern winters, have located in Jamaica their palaces of ease. The climate is without a peer — not too hot by day, not too chilly by night, not too dry, and not too moist. The trade wind blows steadily at noon-day. The mountain breeze walketh in the darkness. There is always a cool spot at midday somewhere around the house. Golf links, not two miles away, afford a chance for exercise to such as rise early enough to escape the noontide sun, or such as brave the torridity of late afternoon. Tennis in the shade of the hotel is always available. And out on a shoal in the western bay lies a remote bath-house where swimming is an unmixed delight.

There are twin harbors, separated from one another by a narrow and lofty promontory on which is set the great bulk of the Hotel Titchfield. From this commodious hostelry the land slopes sharply on either hand, through terraced gardens, to the sea — a sea protected on either side by yet other capes. The harbor entrances are narrow, but deep, and remind one of the dramatic approaches to Havana in Cuba and to San Juan in Porto Rico. Either bay is suitable for ships of deep draught; but at present the eastern one is affected only by the great white-and-gold cruisers that drop in week after week

to land their sight-seeing parties. The western bay, with its equally narrow channel and its greater plenitude of docks, is the busier of the two—with freighters coming and going daily. You sit on the hotel veranda and see them slipping in and out. You learn the whistle code and know which are United Fruit boats and which other lines.

And all the while the breeze blows softly but steadily from the water, through arbors, through roses, through flowering trees. A fountain plashes pleasantly in the garden toward the north. A rag-bag of a Hindu ministers to the fragrant blooms tirelessly through the day. Why do anything? Why not remain here forever? And yet, curiously enough, the Titchfield is open only a few months of the winter, and then lies idle the rest of the year, while the Myrtle Bank, over in stifling Kingston, runs the year round. The United Fruit, which runs both hotels, has at times even talked of abandoning the Titchfield altogether—an incredible thing to do. This terrestrial paradise ought to be perfectly flooded with holiday-makers, from autumn to June. All it needs is to be pushed. No one who ever went thither could be aught but a determined advertiser of Port Antonio. It is the veritable Garden of the Lord.

At eleven in the forenoon and again at four in the

afternoon, a tiny launch goes out to the bath-house on the shoal. The water close to the hotel is sixty feet deep, or thereabouts; but at the bath-house, a mile away out in the midst of the harbor, it is only from five feet to about ankle-deep, according to where you stand. You alight at the house, change your clothing in one of the little cells allotted to you, and then disport at ease in water that differs from the air only in being wet and salty. I have no doubt you could remain in it all day. Of course everybody bathes, and many get themselves rowed out to the shoal at odd hours, preferring it to the rapid launch trip in a crowd.

But for the most part you simply sit in the cool of the deep verandas, now here, now there, as suits the breeze, reading, smoking, having tea — or something else — talking, watching the ships, admiring the dancers of an evening; in short, thoroughly enjoying life. Tropic heat mitigated by a cooling wind, odorous gardens, waving palms, terraces smiling in the sun — such is Port Antonio, an earthly replica of the Persian's heaven. For what says the poet —

“A Persian's heaven is easily made;
It is dark eyes and lemonade!”

I am, as Katrina sometimes reminds me, of a



VIEW FROM PORCH OF TITCHFIELD HOTEL, PORT ANTONIO

sedentary habit. I could linger in such a spot as Port Antonio forever and a day. I should need hardly stir from the hotel. And yet now and then you do stir. You go "downtown" shopping — although there's little enough to buy, save baskets and the cloth for your summer suit. You can make various excursions along the shore. You can ride over to Blue Hole — which is a cavernous cove in the north shore about eight miles to the eastward, where they say (and I believe it) that the depth of the water is three hundred feet or more. The name, of course, comes from the exceptional blueness of the sea here — blue even for this clime, where the sea is never anything but a gorgeously unbelievable ultramarine. You drive thither over a splendid road lined by plantations in which the omnipresent banana and the useful cocoanut figure predominantly.

I spoke a little while ago of the heathen Hindu who attends the Titchfield gardens. He is one of a numerous race, for Hindu importations to Jamaica in past years have been heavy, although the immigration is now cut off. As I understand it, these were brought over as a sort of contract labor, heavily indentured to employers for work in the fields. It was n't slavery, of course; and yet it savored so strongly of servitude that a reaction appears to have set in and the planters are somewhat embarrassed in

consequence to obtain adequate supplies of toilers. No Hindus are coming over now, but the multitude who came in the past seem especially plentiful along the northern side of the island. Dusky of color, they might be confused with the negroes of African descent were it not for their predilection for massive jewelry around the neck or in the ears, or occasionally in the nose, and for their conviction that it is unworthy to wear trousers. The Hindu swathes his legs in swaddling bands, usually of a ragged nature; and while he exceeds the "piece of twisty rag" which Gunga Din affected as his principal uniform, it is much of a muchness therewith. The Jamaica darky, on the contrary, has no caste prejudices. He wears our kind of clothes — and gorgeous ones, of course, after his peculiar taste in which a note of bright blue is conspicuous.

I have no doubt the Hindus keep themselves more or less to themselves, being clannish and bound by curious ideas of religion. The ordinary darky is gregarious, however, and he is a most affable soul. Like our own Southern negro, he loves long words, resounding names, and is strongly religious in his own way.

Naturally he speaks English; but it is dialect English. When he is conversing with a fellow-negro you will scarcely understand one word in a dozen.

When you speak to him he always pretends to understand — but if you would be safe, do not rest content with his “yassah.” Just ask him to repeat what you said. Ten to one he cannot — and then you go over it all again. He usually says “yassah” because that is politely agreeable and saves trouble.

Families in Jamaica are enormous. There is n't the faintest semblance of anything that can be mistaken for race suicide. The wayside hamlets are full of pickaninnies. There appears to be a fondness on the part of Jamaica mothers for resounding names. “Amanilla,” or some such fanciful device, is apt to be attached to females of the species, and it gets to be monotonous. They relate that once, when a negro girl baby was brought before one Bishop Enos to be baptized under the name of “Amanilla” he remonstrated that the name was too common and urged the substitution of something different. Whereupon the devout parents announced that the girl should be named for Bishop Enos himself — and they called her name “Shenos!”

Now that I pause to re-read what has been written I am impressed with the utter inadequacy of it to give any idea of the beauties of Port Antonio. I must give it up, then, and urge that you make trial of it for yourself, if you would fain know one of the loveliest spots on earth. The half has not been told

you — nor the tithe. Why in the world any one, who is not absolutely compelled, should remain in our unspeakable winter climate when such joyous places as Port Antonio are accessible without impoverishment, it is difficult to understand. To know Port Antonio is to love it. To have been there is to go there again and again. Here is summer, without summer's rigor. Here is beauty to be enjoyed without effort. What more can you ask? Would you tire of it? Hardly — but if you did, you could go to the hills. And when you had gone thither you would find yourself sighing for those deep gardens, those airy verandas, that unutterably blue and smiling sea.

It must be healthful, too. Now that I think of it I do not recall that once in all our journeying to and fro among the parishes of the island did I meet a single funeral — and in Porto Rico, a year ago, I was forever taking off my hat in silent honor to the passing caskets of the poor. No doubt men die in Jamaica — and when they die it must indeed be hard to reconcile one's self to go, leaving as one does an earthly paradise. Fortunate, indeed, then, that we are promised even greater glories in that which is to come!

CHAPTER XX

RAFTING IN JAMAICA

JAMAICA, the "Isle of Springs," has numerous brawling rivers, never of great magnitude and usually swift because of the abrupt declivities of the courses which they run. Moreover, they have the disconcerting habit which has been spoken of hitherto of disappearing altogether without warning, only to emerge with undiminished volume somewhere else, the intervening passage being subterraneous.

None, I believe, is navigable save by rafting; but the rafting such as one may enjoy on the Rio Grande near Port Antonio, or on the Rio Cobre near Kingston (beginning at Bog Walk), affords such a pleasant experience that I have been saving it for my closing chapter on winter vacation doings in lands to the southward.

The tremors which one experiences in such a case are purely anticipatory. There is, in fact, nothing about the journey which need cause alarm — and yet the bare mention of shooting rapids is usually terrifying and suffices to keep you in a twitter through several days during which you procrastinate and

postpone. But when you finally announce at the hotel office that your resolution is at last fixed to go a-rafting, the hotel authorities assure you that you ought to buy a raft ticket at the office — of them. You really do not need to, but it does no harm. Likewise no good. You buy it, therefore, at a stipulated tariff in the fond belief that this exempts you from native profiteering at the river — only to discover that your raftsmen, an adept at playing on the tender emotions, draws such a doleful picture of his hard financial condition as the result of your having bought your ticket (they call it a “horder”) in town that you cheerfully disburse thrice the fee by way of largess when you part from him! I mention this now merely because it occurs to me. It does n’t belong here, but much farther on in my experiences with the Black Pearl of all rivermen, hight Charles Roberts.

In order to make this excursion you will need first of all a carriage — which suffices to convey you to the headwaters of the river at a point some five or six miles from town, and which, after abandoning you to the tender mercies of the river drivers, proceeds empty to another point some five miles below, there to pick you up on landing. Meantime you are to sail down a river of surpassing beauty for the space of something more than an hour, now through

placid reaches over gleaming sands, now down roaring rapids over pebbles and boulders innumerable. I have no hesitation in affirming that of all our experiences in Jamaica, this was the most thoroughly delightful in every possible way, from the time we embarked until the time we stepped ashore. On no account whatever is it to be missed.

Wisdom dictates making the journey in the forenoon, before the sun gets in his deadly work for the day. It is well to leave the Titchfield by eight o'clock, if you can bring yourself to rise so early. At that hour the morning is still freshly cool, and as your horses trot nimbly out of the town and up into the adjacent hills you will meet the inflowing tide of market traffic, chiefly afoot — native women toting on their heads just enough of the produce of their meager plantations to win them another day's gains. It is a mixed population, largely Hindu and partly plain negro, the Hindu women gorgeous in their heavy bracelets and necklaces. The driver will, as usual, purvey information as to wayside trees and fruits — generally telling you that it is n't the right season to sample the latter. I have discovered that in the matter of mangoes, breadfruit, custard apples, and so on, man never is, but always to be blest. Next month they will be ripe — not now. Still, if you are lucky enough to win the favor

of some local expert, he or she can generally find you a mango that is prematurely ripe to try — and you will find it pleasantly acrid, with a suggestion of the taste of the arborvitæ leaf, and juicy to a charm.

It is a long climb to the point where the rafts are to be had. The little horses tug manfully up the long grades, and the villages passed are few. But eventually you come to a tiny hamlet, bearing the attractive name of Fellowship, whence a ruder side road branches off into the highlands; and over this, now up and now down, you make a steady progress toward your goal. Very likely an industrious youngster meets you — a crafty raftsman, anxious to be forehanded with possible fares. He has walked out two weary miles from the landing and now he trots eagerly back beside the carriage, extorting repeated promises of patronage. You will discover on reaching the place of general assembly that all his toil is vain. For, you see, you have a ticket, and that puts you under the protection of the master of the boatmen. He waves aside the eager lad who has tagged you in. It seems that this lad is a first-grade pilot — but it is n't his turn and he must n't presume on the others. Wherefore you feel sorry for his fruitless race and secretly pay him a shilling or two — which is really all he expected, anyhow. Then he goes back and does the same thing

over again, thus earning a day's wages without once taking to the river.

That was what happened, at all events, to us. We found the landing-place alive with men and boys, as thick as hasty pudding. Exercising authority over them was a local centurion, a canny Scot with a gentle manner and soft voice, respected by his subordinates and obviously accepted by them as strictly just. There was no squabbling over our allotment, even when the swarthy youth who had claimed us on the way in was firmly but gently denied. MacDonald, or whatever his name was, destined us to the tender care of Charles Roberts — and all the clamoring host fell away as if by magic. Charles, bare of foot and evidently a charter member of the overalls club, stepped forward and waved us toward the water. The chief said he was a good pilot — one of the best. But of course he would say that.

Charles Roberts drew in his craft, and I must admit that it did not look to my untutored eye to be altogether seaworthy. It was made of bamboo poles, perhaps eight of them, twenty-five feet long and of fair girth, lashed together at either end and also at intervals down the middle. When Charles stepped aboard the poles submerged slightly and water flowed agreeably over the entire length of the

ship. Aft, laid crosswise, were other bamboo logs and on top of these yet other poles making a sort of raised dais, on which we were to sit, à la Turque. This meager poop was naturally a few inches above the general level of the raft and was therefore well out of the water if you did n't let your feet down.

Katrina and I took our positions, commended our souls to Heaven, unfurled the green sunshade, and announced in a sepulchral voice that we were all set. Charles Roberts took up a long pole, placed himself at the bow, and we slid gracefully into midstream — which at this point was a broad and peaceful sheet of water gliding as softly as Browning says the Mayne doth.

Well inshore, under the deep shadow of a beetling cliff and just missing the overhanging branches of riotous trees, we slipped gently along. In the distance we could hear our carriage rattle away over the pebbles on shore, on its way to meet us miles below. Birds flitted in the air above. From every tree dripped the long pendants of the orchids which lead parasitic lives on all tropic forests. If there is a Styx in Heaven, as well as in Acheron, it must resemble the Rio Grande of Jamaica.

After a half-mile or so of this uneventful but agreeable sailing we came to our first rapid. Se-

cretly I had dreaded this. It turned out, however, to be a little one and not especially alarming. The water hastened its pace and then plunged down a long hill of rocks. Charles, suddenly awakened to alertness, picked out a promising reach and shot us into it with consummate skill. In a jiffy we were roaring down with the torrent at express speed, dragging gently over pebbles, shipping a sea now and then, but somehow keeping in the current and above all avoiding a broadside rush which would surely have dumped us unceremoniously into the stream. I suppose it was all over in thirty seconds — but it seemed longer. I reflected that the ultimate destination of our voyage lay many hundred feet below and that probably we should have our fill of rapids before we got there; still there was a pleasant tingle of excitement in it, much like that of coasting at home.

Danger there probably is none at all, save that of a possible, if improbable, wetting. Your raft might get away from its pilot and swing broadside to the stream — but it probably seldom does. Ours came near it only once, and when we had got straight again Charles Roberts made himself no little of a hero. He drew a fearsome picture of our potential wreck. But as the raft had dragged bottom all the way down and as a bath in that pellucid river in

that midsummer heat would have hurt no one, we refused to be greatly perturbed.

Whereupon Charles betook himself to poling gently down another placid interval in the river and without warning raised his voice in song. He was not a grand-opera star, but his chantey was well designed to coördinate his muscular movements to the task in hand. It ran something like this, with a stout thrust of the pole at the end of every line for punctuation:

“Come ovah hyah!
Somebody say:
Ah wanta find out whah that cullud fellah gone!
Come ovah hyah!
Somebody say:
Ah wanta find out whah that cullud fellah gone.
Oh, Yankee-doo-doo,
Won't you come home?
Oh, Yankee-doo-doo,
Won't you come home?
Yo' mammy longs to see you comin' home.

“I'se in dis land
One hund'ed yeahs,
Ah could n't save
No dollahs hyah —
Oh, Yankee-doo-doo,
Won't you come home?
Yo' mammy longs to see you comin' home!”

Of course we clapped our hands and chirped as if we had never heard anything so delightful. Katrina

demanding a repetition, which was cheerfully accorded, *allegro ma non troppo*. Likewise Charles Roberts sang others, the import of which I forget. But his repertoire was not extensive and when rapids engaged his attention — as they did ever and anon — the concert was interrupted.

Now and again we met raftsmen working their way painfully back, which is a long job and one which has probably the same meager allurements that attend hauling your sled back to the top of a long coast. Charles drew attention to these men as being in some sort an image of himself after we had left him. He drew a melancholy picture of the hard pull, the lack of excitement, the meager pay. Standing with his back toward us and poling along the placid reaches between rapids he indulged in lachrymose soliloquy.

“Chawles Roberts, you ole fool, whuffo’ you spend yo’ time raftin’ white folks down dis ribber and den draggin’ yo’ ole raff back ag’in? Think what dey pays you for all dat hahd work! Would any one else do it fo’ six shillin’? Ain’t it worf twelve shillin’? Dat’s what white folks hab to pay us when dey don’t get no tickets at de hotel. When dey do get ticket at hotel us poor fellahs we don’t get but six shillin’. Chawles Roberts, you certainly one big fool.”

This speech was not by any means lost on us — who had bought hotel tickets — nor was it intended to be. It was addressed apparently to high heaven — which could be seen smiling as a remote blue above the precipices clad with verdure on either side of the stream. Katrina, whose charitable impulses are easily aroused, nudged me to investigate our dwindling store of silver and in a subdued voice pleaded the cause of a substantial tip. Some telepathic system, or possibly prolonged and ripe experience, conveyed the glad tidings to the pilot, evidently, for very shortly he became less pessimistic and directed our attention to various birds of exotic breed — a languid heron perched on one pole-like leg in the shallows, and a pure white bird which he assured us was called “Darlin’.”

The charm of the Rio Grande, like that of Port Antonio, defies ordinary powers of description. In a way it is like Kubla Khan’s sacred river, Alph, which ran through caverns measureless to man down to a sunless sea — save that no one could call the Caribbean sunless. It meanders leisurely enough for perhaps half a mile at a time, then gathers speed and slides abruptly to another level over a brawling bed of pebbles. It is much more than a brook, without being a real river, save at times of heavy rain. I doubt that there is a more beautiful

stream in the world, or one more solitary; for the abruptness of the hills on either hand and the density of the jungle which clothes their nearly vertical slopes, prevents "the hand of man from setting foot" there and gives you all the sensation of being remote on the Amazon or Orinoco — when as a matter of fact you are n't at any point more than five miles from civilization of the most sophisticated kind as represented by the Hotel Titchfield.

In all the voyage, which consumed perhaps an hour and a half, we saw not a soul save the returning raftsmen. Never was there a house visible until we came to the final lower reaches, where the plain opened up to the sea admitting of banana culture, cocoa, pimento, and such-like growths.

Here Charles Roberts announced that it was time to put in, and deftly quenched our prow in the slushy sand. Thence one picked one's way over moist rocks and gravel to the rudiments of a path, accompanied and assisted by said Charles, who said he would walk down the road "a piece" with us in hope that the carriage would have brought down his little son to help tow the raft back upstream.

And behold it was even so. For when at last the belated horses appeared, there crouched in the stern-sheets a miniature Charles Roberts, grinning from ear to ear.

We were to go next day. It was a matter of getting up at five o'clock in the morning, wherefore we left word to be summoned by the watchman. The night being hot and the upper chamber where we dwelt stifling, we boldly slept with the door wide open.

At what must have been the appointed hour I heard a stealthy step which approached our door, and then, finding it open, paused perplexed. It was the dusky guardian of our sleeping hours, and I heard him mutter tentatively, "Nobuddy hyah?"

I called that I was there — what was up?

"Oh, yassah! Ah come for to make a call!"

In other words, it was time to get up, and time to go, rather than a mere social event. So out of bed, into clothes, down to the station — and back to Kingston, through thirty long and smoky tunnels as interludes in a glorious mountain landscape.

That railroad ride over the mountains between Kingston and the northern ports is not altogether to be recommended. It cannot be a journey of much more than sixty miles, but it requires something like five hours, and a goodly part of the road lies through tunnels as hot and stifling as a fiery furnace. One recalls also Mark Twain's description of the ride along the coast near Genoa — "Like riding through a flute and looking out of the holes." Yet it must be

admitted that the view through the holes is invariably fascinating and the air of the altitudes at which most of the tunnels occur is more agreeable in temperature than that of the flat and uninspiring stretch that leads you at last into Kingston. No one, surely, ever takes the railroad across who can make the transit by motor.

Katrina insists that if she were to choose between Jamaica and Porto Rico, she would unhesitatingly prefer the latter as better in climate and not inferior in scenery. On the whole I incline to concur, although it is with a reluctant accord. Porto Rico certainly has the less trying heat — but of the scenery I am more doubtful. That of Jamaica is hard to excel. Each to his taste — and much will depend upon one's power to support a degree of heat consistent with being very nearly in the sun's directest rays. Those of us gifted with the characteristics of the salamander will probably reverse our family judgment. Meantime, speaking in general, like Kipling's "Tramp Royal," I have liked them all.

THE END

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